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YOU HOW P.51

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AND SIMPLER,
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ROAD OR PATH
P.96

**THIS PIZZA IS
ROCKET FUEL
FOR RIDING**

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YEP—WE'RE
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**WHAT TO DO
IF YOU GET
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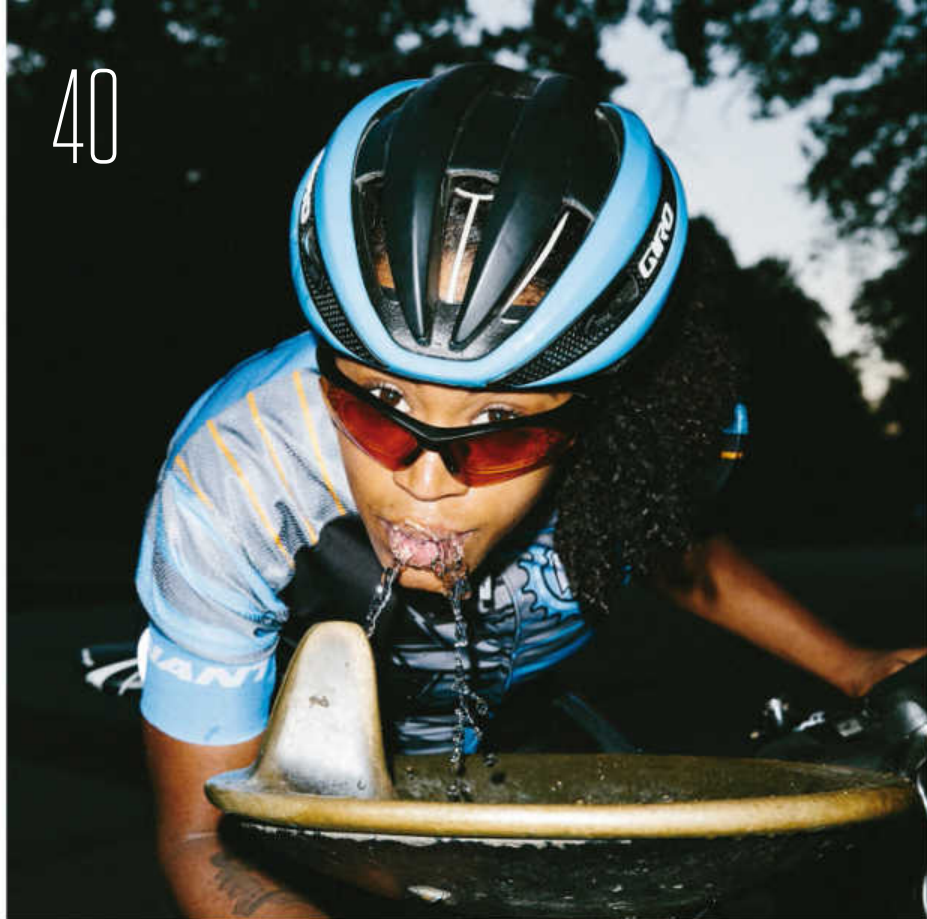
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- 
- ☑ Big Hill
 - ☑ Frozen Creek
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Next up: A shake
from Rocky's

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MATTHEW BUSCHE,
*Professional Cyclist, Trek Factory Racing
Winner, 2015 U.S. Pro Cycling Championships*

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TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BREVARD, NC

The Selection

by BILL STRICKLAND

► THIS MONTH'S TOP TIPS, BEST ADVICE, AND PERSONAL PICKS FROM OUR EDITOR



1

EVEN THOUGH I BELIEVE

that energy, recovery, and hydration-optimization powders help people ride better (and feel better while they're riding better), I almost never mix them into my bottles. I like water. [As sales guy Steve Brawley enjoys pointing out, I also listen to vinyl.] When I make an exception—on days that I know will be ridiculously hot, hard, long, or some combination of all three—I go with GQ-6 Flooid, which tastes lighter than other concoctions, doesn't leave a coating on my mouth and teeth, and feels less heavy in my stomach. Favorite flavor: Green Apple.



3

I got sort of embarrassing-level excited when SRAM shared plans to bring its one-chainring, wide-range-cassette drivetrain to road bikes—there aren't many technological changes anymore that actually simplify the bicycle. We got early versions of the road-specific system and tested its capability and suitability for crit racing, adventure rides, and just generally pedaling around. Read our take starting on page 96. According to SRAM, at least 35 brands will offer 2016 bikes with Force 1 or Rival 1 drivetrains. Expect many of these to be adventure bikes—based on our tests and our read of the cycling zeitgeist, 1x drivetrains will fuel the already fast-growing popularity of stringing together a ride made of pavement, dirt, gravel, grass, and whatever you happen to run into (or using the same bike for separate rides on those surfaces). Though we couldn't test it for this roundup, of all the forthcoming 1x models we know about, the Cannondale Slate is among the most emblematic of the trend. It's not a road bike, not a mountain bike, not a cyclocross bike, and not one of the overcompromised "hybrids" of old. It's a bike. It has a lightweight aluminum frame, a 30mm-travel Lefty suspension fork, and 650b wheels with 42mm-wide tires (which results in the same rolling diameter as the standard road-bike wheel size of 700c). Built with SRAM's Force 1 group and a wide-range, 10-42 cassette, the Slate will be \$4,260. Look for a full test on BICYCLING.com.

4

MY SETUP FOR THE CICLOSTORICA EMILIO

de Marchi, one of those homage rides to vintage equipment and apparel, this one held in Conegliano, Italy, was an '80s steel Chesini with an '83 Campagnolo 50th Anniversary Groupset, the one inlaid with 22-karat-gold logos, and which I'd never seen outside of paranoiacally preserved collectors' vaults. But it was the riders well past their 50s who made the 90K unforgettable for me, with their movements in the pack and their pedal strokes smoothed to the most essential and most beautiful, and their awareness of the rest of us and the road and the next thing that would happen so natural and so complete that being there with them felt something like being at once humored, and encouraged, and appreciated, in part, for still having so far to go.



Those old riders, they also seemed somehow younger than me in spirit. Still don't know why, but hanging with them reminded me of how, as a kid, I never thought of myself as going out for a ride, or even being on a ride. I was just riding, whenever I wanted and as much or as little as I wanted, and the only reward was the action itself.

2

Some do the ride even though they can't do the ride, and eventually they can do the ride. Some never do the ride, and can never do the ride.



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► I SEE LITTLE KIDS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD ON BIKES WITHOUT PEDALS. WHAT'S THE DEAL?

They're called balance bikes, and they make learning to ride simpler. Without pedals, cranks, and brakes, the bike essentially acts as a scooter. Kids use their feet to move it forward and can coast while sitting on the seat. It's easy for them to put a foot down if the bike starts to tilt, and there's no chain to snag or leave greasy marks on clothing and shoes. Most importantly, little riders can focus on learning to maintain momentum and balance without worrying much about falling—skills that will transfer when they graduate to a big-kid bike.

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► What does “Shut up, legs!” mean?

The popular phrase was coined by Jens Voigt, the recently retired, ever-quotable German cyclist known for his daring break-aways, never-say-die attitude, and entertaining posttrace interviews. After Jens attacked during consecutive stages in the Tour de France several years ago, a Danish reporter asked him how he was able to do it despite the overwhelming fatigue his body must be feeling. Voigt replied, “I tell my body, ‘Shut up, legs. Do what I tell you.’” The phrase went viral and has since become a source of inspiration, a mantra even, for cyclists of all ages.

► Is it a faux pas for me to throw my arms up after winning a town-line sprint?

There are competitive group rides in which town-line sprints are hotly contested. But in general, victory salutes should be reserved for actual races (or for basement trainer sessions while screening *Breaking Away*).

Group-ride victory salutes will make some riders wonder why, if you’re so focused on winning, you don’t take out your competitive drive on a real racecourse. A friendly note of caution: YouTube is filled with videos of riders who tried to celebrate a win but lost control of their bikes and crashed across the finish line. No one wants to see that happen, especially on a group ride.

► Pro teams often sell race bikes at the end of the season. Is this a good purchase?

While those bikes carry the cachet of a race or the pros who rode them, at their most basic, those same machines are also tools—well-used and abused ones at that. So find out a bit of the bike’s pedigree if you can. Is it your favorite rider’s everyday training bike, or was it used only at a Grand Tour? Was it a spare that mainly rode the top of a car? These details matter and can mean the difference between a bike that’s almost new and one that’s done hard time.

► Do I need to check my bike before every ride?

It’s a good idea. It takes just a few minutes and can save you a lot of future hassle. This routine from Daimeon Shanks, owner of The Service Course repair shop in Boulder, Colorado, and head mechanic for the Noosa Pro Cyclocross Team, will help you roll out worry-free:

WHEELS >> Spin them to make sure your brakes aren’t rubbing. Check that quick-releases

are tightened correctly. Inflate your tires to the proper pressure.

BRAKES >> Brakes should engage before the levers hit the handlebar, and the pads should be adequate. Rim-brake pads will need to be replaced if the grooves are worn away, while disc-brake pads should be changed when there’s less than 1 mm of compound left on the pad’s surface.

SHIFTING >> Click through all of your gears, checking to see that your chain moves smoothly and evenly, and that it doesn’t fall off to the inside or outside of the cassette or chainring.

CHAIN >> Is it dry? Or super grimy? Clean and lube if necessary, once a month or after every wet or messy ride.

► I want to try cyclocross. Do I need a special bike?

No, not really. You should check in with the race promoter first, but for most amateur races, any mountain bike and some road bikes that can accommodate larger tires will do. Of course, they’re not ideal. ‘Cross bikes are designed to be ridden through muck and carried over barriers. The small tire clearances and narrow brakes on a road bike can make shedding mud difficult, and the sloping top tube and rear suspension of many mountain bikes mean they’re tough to shoulder. If you find yourself lining up every weekend, a ‘cross bike is a worthy investment—it will be lighter, less cumbersome, and better suited to messy conditions. But if that’s not in your budget, then rock on with what you’ve got.

WINNING ADVICE

HOW DO YOU GET BETTER AT CLIMBING?

Positive thoughts: “This isn’t as bad as you think,” or “You’ve done steeper hills in the past.” If I think about it being hard, then it becomes hard. When all else fails, I think about what flavor of ice cream I will reward myself with.

BECKY NEAL
LAKEPORT, CA



Good thinking, Becky. Stay positive during your next repair with this [Park Tool Home Mechanic Starter Kit](#).

SHARE YOUR BEST TIPS TO WIN!

How do you deal with rude drivers?

Submit your answer to
BICYCLING@rodale.com with
the subject line “Winning Advice.”

▼
(UM...)
**I HAVE
TO PEE
CONSTANTLY
DURING
RIDES.
WHAT’S UP?**

Your kidneys are good at balancing urine output with the quantity of fluid that you drink. “So if you constantly have to pee, you’re probably drinking beyond your needs,” says Maurie Luetkemeier, PhD, a professor of integrative physiology at Alma College in Alma, Michigan. You should have to go about as frequently as when you’re not riding, he says. Experiment with how much you drink on the bike to find the best amount for you. Caveat: A frequent urge to pee might be a symptom of something more serious. If you’re also experiencing pain or numbness in the pelvis or saddle region, or erectile dysfunction, then it’s time to check in with a doctor.

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One tip: If you opt to ride your mountain bike, ditch the bar ends. They're prohibited in many races, for safety reasons—in a mass start, you run the risk of hooking your neighbor on the forward-facing ends.

► **How do I know when I need new tires?**

For road tires, look at the profile

from above the bike. If the center tread has a broad, flat spot all the way around, that means the rubber is mostly worn off and is only thinly covering the casing. It's time to switch. For mountain tires, look for center knobs that are shredded and worn close to the base rubber. For any tire, regularly inspect for large cuts in the tread. If a gash is wider than ¼

inch or goes all the way through the casing, use a tire boot to reinforce the inside and continue to monitor it. You can see worn casings by looking at the sidewalls—if the threads show through, and particularly if you see a telltale crosshatch pattern, the casing is toast and it's time for new rubber.

► **I like to listen to music when I work out. Is it illegal to use headphones while I ride? Is it unsafe?**

The legality depends on where you ride. Each state and municipality has its own laws, says David Rankin, an attorney in New York City. In Rankin's jurisdiction, for example, cyclists are allowed to ride with one earbud in, but some areas of the country ban use completely. To learn the rules in your region, visit bikeleague.org and read up on your state's bike laws. As for safety, Rankin says,

"That's on the rider." Slayer turned up to 11 might fire up your energy, but it also can drown out traffic noise, which is never safe on the open road. Be aware of your surroundings and make sure you can hear approaching cars. Some riders like to ride with music only in their right ear so they're more alert to traffic passing them on the left.

► **When I catch up after getting dropped on a climb, should I apologize for making people wait?**

Nope, as long as you're trying, says Australian pro Chloe Hosking of Team Wiggle-Honda. "There's a general understanding that there are varying levels of fitness and some people are just more blessed when the road tilts upwards," Hosking explains. But if your riding partners are trying to match Chris Froome's

100

DAILY GRAMS OF CHOCOLATE THAT HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND STROKE. SO GO AHEAD, HAVE THAT HERSHEY'S KISS—BETTER YET, HAVE A FEW.

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power numbers for the day, she suggests breaking off for a solo spin or asking the hammers to loop back and pick up the slower riders.

► **My friends all eat premade bars on rides, but I can't stand them. Are there good homemade options?**

There are plenty of recipes for bars made from common pantry staples like oats and nuts (try one of our favorites at BICYCLING.com/DIYbars), but you can get creative too. Some eclectic options: Jasmine rice and bacon rolled in *furikake* (a savory Japanese seasoning); corn tortillas heated on a cast-iron skillet, then filled with cheddar or *queso fresco*, sweet potato, and jalapeño *escabeche* (or a simple hot sauce); or oats, cocoa, and maple syrup mixed with matcha (a green tea known for its antioxidant

READER SURVEY

IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE CYCLING SPLURGE, WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

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A SPLASHY PAINT JOB FOR YOUR BIKE	3%

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properties) and covered in toast-ed pistachios. Bonus: If you make snacks at home, you can experiment with what works for you nutritionally; lose a lot of the sodium, sugar, and preservatives found in prepackaged foods; and impress your friends when you whip out a homemade treat on a ride. But be prepared to start taking orders.

► **I always spaz out when I try to clip in to my Look-style pedals after stopping. How can I get better at this?**

Yeah, it's definitely not fun when everyone on your ride seems to take off effortlessly while you're left teetering at a slow speed, your foot slipping and sliding all over your pedal. It's a skill that takes time to finesse—but there is a trick to it. When you're stopped with one foot on the ground, reverse pedal with the

foot that's still clipped in, until the crankarm is just forward of vertical. Your knee should be bent a little more than at a right angle. When it's go time, this placement ensures that your first pedal stroke will help spin the free pedal upright to a position where you can engage it. And it will create enough rolling momentum for you to get your foot clipped in without having to scoot along to gain speed.

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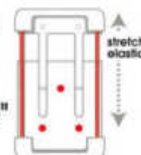
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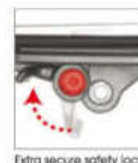
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Your Ride on Weed

Now that pot is legal for certain uses in almost half the US, you might be wondering about the drug's reported exercise benefits. Here's what to know about riding high. BY SELENE YEAGER

✌️ Don't harsh my mellow

Pot affects your amygdala—the part of your brain that regulates fight-or-flight response. “It turns down the anxiety and nerves associated with competition,” says Brian R. Christie, PhD, neuroscience program director at University of Victoria in British Columbia. “It can put you in that calm flow state that generally kicks in only after you’re engaged in really high-intensity exercise.” But it doesn’t calm everyone down—research shows that people who are prone to panic actually have increased anxiety when they light up.

18.9

MARIJUANA USERS IN THE US,
UP FROM 14.4 MILLION IN 2007

COMFORTABLY NUMB By reducing inflammation, marijuana can “increase pain threshold and decrease perception of pain. So folks feel like they can train longer and harder,” says Christie. Some studies also report that marijuana can improve sleep.



“I DIDN’T INHALE... RECENTLY.”

RACERS, TAKE NOTE: EVEN IF POT IS LEGAL IN YOUR STATE, WADA STILL CONSIDERS IT AN ILLEGAL PERFORMANCE ENHANCER. EVEN OCCASIONAL USE MAY GET YOU BUSTED: IN ONE STUDY OF REGULAR POT SMOKERS, A 35-MINUTE BIKE RIDE TRIGGERED THC—A CHEMICAL IN MARIJUANA—STORED IN THE FAT CELLS TO RELEASE INTO THE BLOODSTREAM.



ROOKIE MOVE

Marijuana can lead to fuzzyheadedness and impaired coordination. Trying it before a ride can be a bad idea.

2 → 7

times increase in marijuana's potency (as measured by THC levels) since the 1970s, thanks to cross-breeding by growers



cannabinoids

[kə-ˈnā-bə-ˈnɔɪds] The unique chemicals found in marijuana. Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the one primarily responsible for getting you high. But 65 others have been identified, and how they react with THC impacts how the weed affects you.

GET OUT THERE



PHOTO: SEVERSON // RIDER: LOPES



HIGH ROLLER II

“Flyin’ Brian” Lopes is a mountain bike racing legend with 9 Norba titles, 26 UCI World Cup wins, 6 Overall World Cup titles and 4 UCI World Championships. An athlete who embodies the idea of **Get Out There**, he’s been racing and winning since 1989. Named the best *All-around world class cycling athlete by USA Today*, Brian races Downhill, Dual Slalom, 4X, Enduro, XC, Cyclocross and Road! As an MTB and BMX Hall of Fame inductee, Brian’s mastery of mountain biking is indisputable. **Maxxis is proud to sponsor Flyin’ Brian as he continues to forge his legacy into the future. Get Out There!**

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This is Way Easier Than You Think

A solid track stand can help you stay clipped in—and take off faster—while waiting at red lights or stop signs. Perfect it with this four-step drill from Colby Pearce, a coach and former U.S. Olympian track cyclist. **BY JASON SUMNER**



STEP 1 Pedal in a medium-low gear on a quiet stretch of road, in a parking

lot, or on grass. Start on a slight uphill grade; it's easier to learn on. Point your bike sideways, perpendicular to the slope. Grip your hoods lightly with your fingers on the brakes, and keep your body weight centered over the bike. Start gently rolling to a stop.



STEP 2 As you slow down, stand up and turn your front wheel to a 30-degree angle

from the top tube, pointing your wheel uphill.



STEP 3 While turning your wheel, rotate your cranks so that your pedals

are level, and the uphill side is forward. Look ahead, not down, which can throw off equilibrium. Fix your gaze on something stationary.



STEP 4 Find your balance point, and slowly rock back and forth by applying

subtle pressure to your forward crank, then easing off. Avoid touching your brakes once your initial momentum has been stopped. If you feel your bike rolling backward or downhill, push harder on the forward crank. If you start leaning forward too far, ease pressure off that crank. And if you feel yourself losing your balance, ride it out and try again.



Q/A

Riding in the drops scares me. How do I get comfortable gettin' low? It helps to understand that you actually have more control in the drops when you are descending and cornering. Your center of gravity is lower, and you have a better hold on the handlebar and the brakes. (Note that braking will feel different, like you have to pull the levers farther.) Practice moving your hands to the drops one at a time until you're more comfortable, says Missy Erickson, a five-time national track champion. Then you can go for two at once. "Stay relaxed, keep your upper body loose, and don't forget to breathe." Core strength is key, too, she adds. "The stronger your core, the more stable you will be when you transition." See our workout on page 30 to shore up your midsection.

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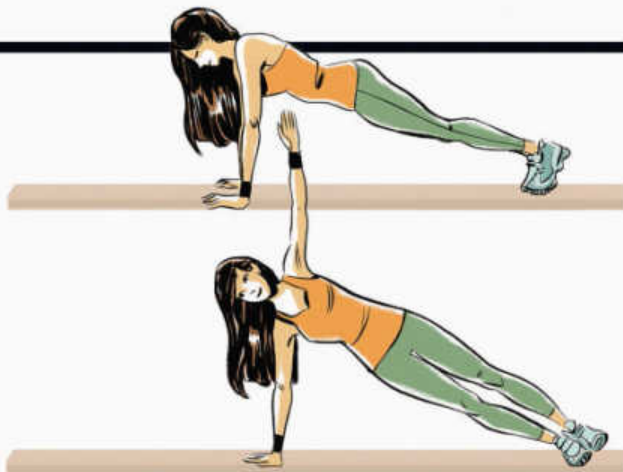
The Once-a-Week Core Workout

FANTASTIC NEWS FOR CRUNCH HATERS:

A study published in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness* found that doing a short core workout just once a week gives you the same strength benefits as doing it two or three times weekly. This 10-minute routine will work the key muscles that can improve your power and endurance in the saddle. Do 12 reps of each move, one after the next, with no rest. Repeat for another set. Yep, you just got more time to ride. You're welcome.—SELENE YEAGER

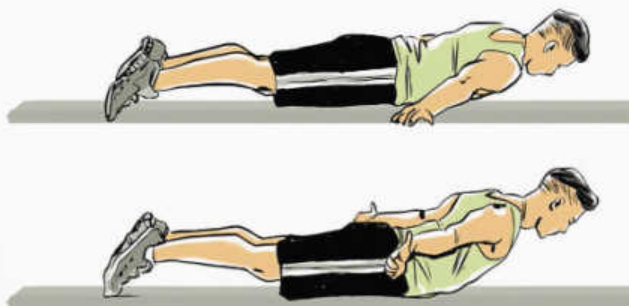
ROTATING SIDE PLANK ▶

Start in a push-up position. Balance on your right hand and extend your left arm toward the ceiling. Place your left foot on top of your right, resting on the edges of your feet. Hold for one to two seconds. Roll back to center, then balance on your left arm so that you are in side plank facing the opposite direction. Hold for one to two seconds; roll back to center. That's one rep.



COBRA LIFT ▶

Lie facedown, legs extended, arms out and back about 45 degrees, palms down. Contract your glutes, squeeze your shoulder blades together, press your legs into the floor, and lift as much of your torso up as far as you can (this may be just your chest), rotating your arms so your thumbs point to the ceiling. Keep your neck straight. Pause. Return to start position.



SCAPIN

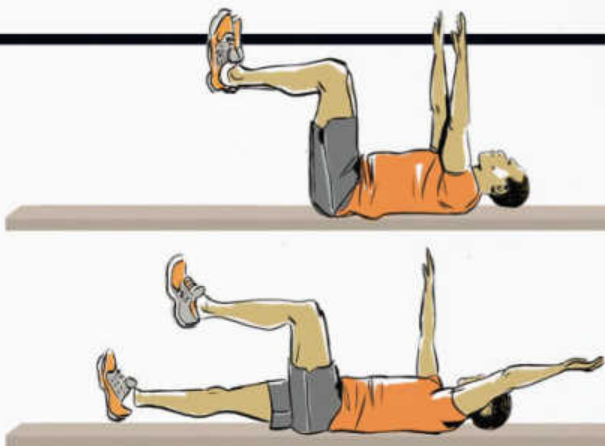
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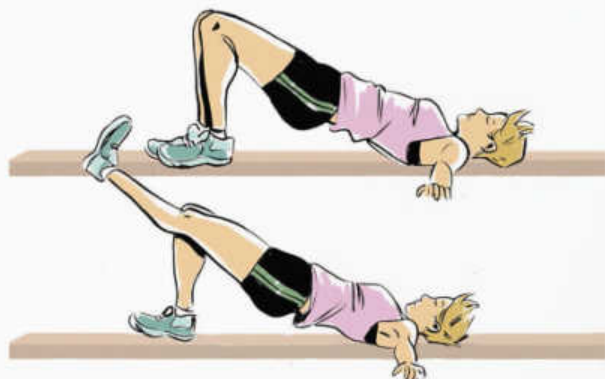


DEAD BUG ▶ Lie on your back, arms extended toward the ceiling, legs perpendicular to the floor. Bend your knees 90 degrees. Brace your core so that your back is flat. Slowly lower your left arm and right leg simultaneously, your arm reaching toward your head and leg straight, until your lower back starts to lift. Return to the starting position and repeat on the opposite side. That's one rep.



SINGLE-LEG BRIDGE ▶

Lie on your back, arms out to your sides, palms down, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor close to your butt. Squeeze your glutes and raise your hips to create a straight line from your knees to your shoulders. Raise and extend your left leg, keeping your hips level. Lower back to start, with your butt on the floor. Repeat on the opposite side. That's one rep.



ASK A PRO



Q/A

Do I really need to buy special sport gummies? Aren't they just candy?

Don't ditch the Shot Bloks for the Haribo just yet. Sport gummies have specific ingredients to give you fast energy, says Eve Pearson, RD, CSSD, and owner of Nutriworks, a sports nutrition consulting business where she works with amateur and elite athletes of all types. Pearson says to look for electrolytes and a mix of glucose and fructose—they're the main carbohydrates your body uses during exercise. And eat them primarily when you need quick hits of energy, such as in a race. On endurance rides, stick with real food that provides more, and longer-lasting, fuel. "Most people who are on an endurance ride need between 120 and 360 calories an hour," says Pearson. "If they're just using gummies, they don't eat enough."

DESIGNED FOR YOUR JOURNEY

The Critérium du Dauphiné is considered by many to be one of the best indicators of Tour de France success. Raced across many of the same roads it is a test not only for riders but also the equipment. Victory here can be a stepping stone to glory in July. The Cofidis Pro Cycling Team will be conquering those roads aboard the Kenda Kountach Endurance and Kriterium Endurance tires. Dual layer puncture protection and race tuned rubber compounds take the fear of the away, leaving the rest up to you . . .

CRITÉRIUM DU DAUPHINÉ, STAGE 2

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I my bike

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THE ONE THING THAT CHANGED IT ALL

→ FINALLY HANGING ON

I was riding the Vallée de Chevreuse, a popular route out of Paris—70 miles with more than 4,000 feet of climbing—with two of my friends. I'm used to them pulling away from me on climbs. We got to the last hill and I was really starting to struggle. This time I thought, "Okay, I'm doing it. I'm going to push and follow them. Even if they're a few meters ahead, I will be there." I didn't want to put a foot down and have to walk. Making it up that climb changed my outlook on life in general. Since I could face that challenge, I can accomplish other things. I think it's all mental. When you come across difficulty, focus on what you are doing and go for it.

GÉRALD CELESTINE, 36 / IT PRODUCTION ENGINEER / PARIS

KNOW HOW

Helpful Advice From All Kinds of Riders



Head of the class:
Studies suggest
that kids who are
more physically
active do better
in school.



KNOW HOW

THE COOLEST DAD EVER

“IT STARTED WITH me riding my son to school when he was in preschool,” says Glen Buhlmann, 44, a year-round bike commuter and active-transportation advocate in Kirkland, Washington. “In first grade, classmates who lived near us wanted to join in with their parents.” The father of two began leading a bike train—an organized ride with designated pickup spots along the route—to the elementary school two days a week. Six years later, as many as 25 kids (one-third of the student body) get to class by bike with Buhlmann and his 9-year-old daughter. Here are his tips for riding with kids, whether you’re pedaling for transportation or recreation.—**DANIELLE MUELLER**

► Choose the right route

Try to pick streets that have low traffic volume and speed. And I don’t mean the posted speed limit, because in many cases people go significantly faster. Neighborhoods that have a grid network are ideal because you can go just one or two blocks off the major streets but get to the same destinations. We cross arterials where it’s easiest for cars to see us—preferably where there’s a flashing yellow light.

► Give the play-by-play

To teach kids safety, talk through the things you want them to do. If you roll up to a stop sign, say, “OK, we’re stopping at the stop sign before the sidewalk. Now we are looking left and right and left again.” They hear how you think and see what you do, and they will gradually learn.

► Be visible

Put a flashing red light on the back of your bike, even in daylight. And teach kids to ride a

straight line. Weaving in and out of parked cars is more dangerous than being out in the lane.

► Make it fun

When riding as a family, plan for it to take longer than you think it will. Let the kids set the pace, and pack drinks and snacks. Talk to your kids about the things you get to see—a house being built or all the birds and animals. You don’t have the same kind of opportunities for conversation driving them around in a minivan.



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The Five-Minute Trick for a Great Ride

BESIDES PULLING STUNTS you probably never knew were possible on a bike, like riding one-legged down a handrail, professional trials rider Ryan Leech is also a yoga instructor and coach who trains mountain bikers in the physical and mental aspects of riding. He believes daily meditation not only improves your cycling, but also makes each ride more fun. “I do a lot of cross-country mountain biking and road riding, and it’s easy to check out, especially if you’re solo,” Leech says. “Meditation has helped me to stay more present so I’m keeping up my cadence, and more aware of my heart rate, not solely relying on technology. And I find my bandwidth to take it all in—the raw experience of the moment, being out in nature, with friends—is bigger.” Start building your mental muscle with Leech’s five-minute meditation for cyclists. —GLORIA LIU

HOW TO MEDITATE

Try this meditation five to six times a week at the same time each day, gradually building up to longer periods. Leech does about 20 minutes a day.

- Set a timer for five minutes.
- Sit on a chair with your sit bones on the front edge and your back straight.
- With your eyes open, and without bending your neck, look down about 45 degrees. Keep your gaze soft.
- Focus on your breath and body, paying attention to how they feel in the moment without using words or judgments to describe them.
- When you notice yourself being lost in thought, bring your awareness back to the moment and your body—think of this as the “rep” in this mental workout.
- Repeat until the time is up.

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KNOW HOW

The World's Friendliest Group Ride

WHEN JULYNN WASHINGTON signed up for Zwift—the cycling video game that allows you to pedal with other riders in real time—she could barely finish six miles. Now, nine months later, the 49-year-old Army veteran from Roseboro, North Carolina, has logged multiple centuries on the platform and launched its first no-drop rides. “We get people who normally ride alone to join in and build their fitness,” Washington says. Here are her tips for getting the most from a virtual group ride.—**ELSPETH HUYETT**

1 GET CONNECTED

There's a group called Zwift Riders on Facebook. Everyone who asks to join gets added. We post our social rides there and on our Strava club page.

2 FOLLOW THE LEADER

Our no-drop rides have a pacesetter at the front and a sweeper at the back to make sure everyone stays together. Don't pass the pacesetter.

3 BE A HERD ANIMAL

Drafting on Zwift isn't like it is on the road where it's one person lined up after another. Your avatars can overlap and you'll still be in the draft.

4 DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

If you're struggling at the back, ask the sweepers for help through the messaging system on the mobile app. They can let you draft off of them and pull you up to the group. Hang in there—you'll get better.

5 FEEL FREE TO GO PEE

If you need to, stop riding. The group will keep going. You could try to catch up, but I'd recommend waiting until we come back around. The lap is six miles and it takes us about 22 minutes.

6 UPGRADE!

The more you ride, the more accessories, kits, and bikes you can unlock for your avatar.

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THE DETAILS
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She Wants to Be the First African American Female Pro

IN ONLY HER SECOND year of racing bikes, Ayesha McGowan of Brooklyn took home the 2015 New York State Cat 3 road-race championship. The 28-year-old preschool music teacher is also the program director for the nonprofit InTandem, which uses tandem bikes to provide riding opportunities to people with disabilities. Here's how she plans to make history—and shares her love of cycling along the way.—**MOLLY HURFORD**

► In 2007, I borrowed my mom's bicycle—may it rest in peace—from our basement. It still had a baby carrier attached to it, for my sister, who is eight years older than me.

► The day before the New York State championships, I decided I wanted to win. I was nervous since I haven't done a lot of climbing. But I'm mentally tough—that's what I have going for me. If I decide I'm going to do something, I manage to pull it off.

► I've spent the whole year getting comfortable sticking to a wheel and

trusting it. To get over the fear of being near people, do more group rides. In the city, a lot of the ladies who do these rides also race and are happy to give advice.

► Next year I will be a Cat 2, for sure. Hopefully, I'll be picked up by a domestic elite team.

► As far as I know, if I got a pro license, I'd be the first African American female pro. I'm waiting to hear about someone who's already done it—I would be so excited!

► My favorite part of training tandem captains is making

them ride on the back. I have them close their eyes and take them in circles. People are like, "Whoa, I can't do anything to control what's happening right now." That's the moment they get it: You have to put your complete trust in the person on the front.

► On the tandem we try to be very verbal: count down to start and stop, mention any big bumps that are coming up.

► People with disabilities often don't get a lot of exercise. I love riding bikes; I can't imagine what I'd do if I wasn't able to do it anymore.



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Recommended

A recurring, unequivocal, indefensible endorsement of things that make us happy **BY LEAH FLICKINGER**



1 Giro Wind Bomber Jacket

When a coworker told me she loved my outfit the day I wore this instead of my standard hoodie, I realized I'd stumbled upon a new wardrobe staple. The bomber has since become my go-to topper for chilly days, on or off a bike. \$120

2 A Musette Bag

I use a musette instead of a purse for all the reasons the traditional cycling bag makes sense when riding: It lays flat, goes over my shoulder for hands-free access, and fits plenty without tempting me to overpack. This one-off from British company Il Soigneur is no longer made, but you can find great options on Etsy.

3 ENVE Carbon Fiber Compact Road Cycling Handlebar

This was the last component I chose for my new bike—and it was the perfect finishing touch. It plays nice with my ENVE fork and stem, the rounded shape is comfortable to hold, and the

compact curve means I don't feel stretched out in the drops. Tip: Match your handlebar width to your shoulder width. \$350

4 Technivorm Moccamaster Coffeemaker

After my beloved Gaggia espresso machine died and couldn't be resuscitated, I didn't want to shell out thousands to replace it. I churned through a half dozen cheap coffeemakers before investing in this one, which makes the best drip brew I've tasted. We got one for the BICYCLING office last year and it's proven incredibly durable: We make at least five pots of coffee a day and the machine is still going strong. \$329

5 Presta Tire Levers

It's better to avoid using levers to reinstall a tire, but with these you're less likely to pinch your tube. Get as much of the tire back on as you can, hook a lever to the rim, and slide it along the remaining section to help maneuver the tire into place. \$5 a lever

CHOSEN BY Executive editor LEAH FLICKINGER, whose two favorite ride snacks are 1) a peanut-butter, prosciutto, and fig-jam sandwich, 2) bread with butter and *hagelslag* (Dutch chocolate sprinkles).



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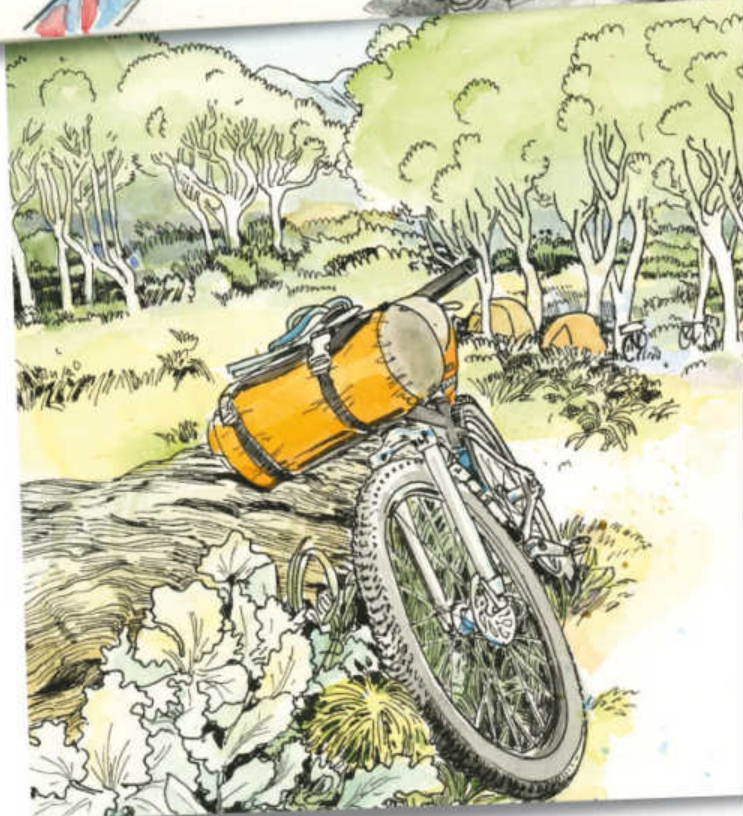
GM



KNOW HOW

YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THIS RIDE JOURNAL

When he's not creating art for bike companies such as Blackburn, Ibis Cycles, and Vanilla, Chris McNally can be found pedaling the roads and trails of San Francisco. The 39-year-old illustrator often stops along the way to capture his rides in drawings and watercolors. He makes a compelling case for stashing a sketchbook in your jersey pocket. "When I take my watercolors on a ride, it's a completely different experience than a training ride—it's more of a meditation," McNally says. "Painting outdoors inspires me to develop a new color palette in a way that I never would inside." Here he shares how he combines his two passions, and gives advice for unleashing your inner artist on the fly. ►



PICK UP A FRIEND WITH BENEFITS.*

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► I came into the cycling world as a mountain biker because I grew up on the top of a mountain.

► My first bike was a hand-me-down Rockhopper from my dad. In 1998, when I moved to San Francisco from Colorado, I got my first road bike, a 1984 Merckx.

► Since college, I've always had a sketchbook on me.

► I try to capture the look, feel, and mood of a ride. San Francisco has so much shifting light and moisture in the air, which makes the lighting really dramatic.

► Picking a line and flowing through natural landscapes is a spiritual experience for me.

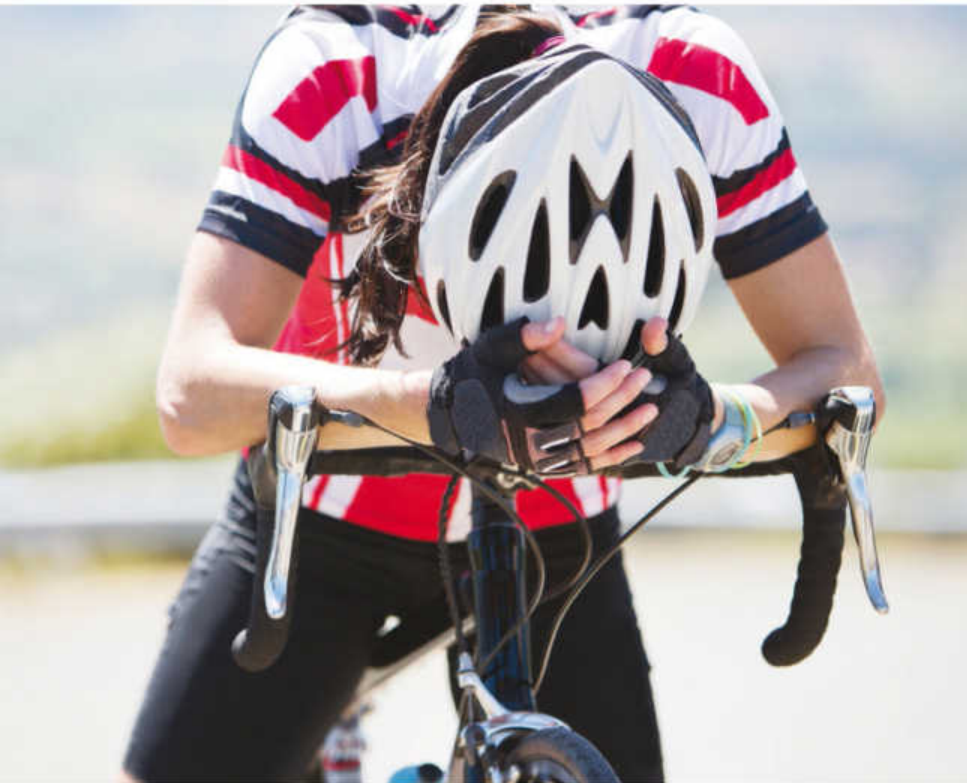
► Stop during your ride. Pay attention to your surroundings. Don't do anything but look at the world around you.

► Desert landscapes inspire me—the cactuses and rock formations are amazing.

► I just got new prescription glasses, so all of a sudden I can see much better detail, which is why I'm so obsessed with patterns in nature.

► Compact watercolors and a small palette will fit into a fanny pack. You can use a camping cutting board as a backboard for your sketchbook.

► My favorite piece is my most recent work until the next thing I make, and after a week or two I never want to look at it again.—DANIELLE MUELLER



How Elite Cyclists Are Gaining An “Edge”

Supplement Providing EPO-Like Effects

Cyclists have long sought ways to improve their performance through nutritional supplements and creative training strategies. Some have gone as far as using synthetic drugs and blood doping to gain an advantage. A new supplement giving cyclists EPO-like effects is generating controversy.

The product that has been producing so much debate is EPO-BOOST® - an all natural supplement developed by U.S. based Biomedical Research Laboratories. EPO is industry shorthand for erythropoietin, a hormone produced by the kidneys that regulates red blood cell (RBC) production.

Increasing red blood cell production has long been the focus of competitive athletes due to the impact that RBC levels have on oxygen intake and utilization. The greater the red blood cell production, the greater the body's ability to absorb oxygen, which in turn gives an athlete more strength and endurance. Strength and endurance are precious resources to any athlete. Thus competitive athletes have tried various techniques to gain an advantage by increasing EPO and RBC levels.

Traditional techniques for boosting RBC

levels include synthetic drugs and blood doping. These practices are both dangerous and banned by organized sports associations. The makers of EPO-BOOST® claim that their patent-pending formula is all-natural and is clinically shown to safely increase erythropoietin levels, resulting in greater strength and endurance.

The scientific evidence behind EPO-BOOST® does seem to be compelling. A 28-day double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial, performed by Dr. Whitehead from the Department of Health and Human Performance at Northwestern State University, showed that the active ingredient in EPO-BOOST® increased EPO production by over 90% compared to the group taking the placebo.¹ The supplement group also showed dramatic improvements in athletic performance (as measured by VO2max and running economy).

Since its release, competitive athletes have raved about this new supplement, which offers all the benefits of greater EPO levels with none of the dangerous side effects or legal trouble. Derek Harmon, a US Cup California State Champion 3 years in a row, stated, “EPO-

BOOST has helped me keep my blood levels optimized during a long season of training and racing. Dealing with the demands of being an older Pro, EPO-BOOST has proven to be a great asset to my racing, training, and recovery.”

Mr. Harmon is not alone in his praise of the product. Travis Beam, a top cyclist from North Carolina, used EPO-BOOST® in his preparation for the season. Travis stated, “starting the season I made several goals to accomplish in my racing career. To achieve those goals, I knew I needed something extra to support my training. After a month of using EPO-BOOST and Trifuel I started seeing crazy gains in my endurance and power during training and my speed picked up to the next level! I am a firm believer in these products and cannot wait to see how these gains will help my performance in events later this year.”

Not everyone is so endeared to the product. Several athletes have said the supplement gives some athletes an unfair advantage. They describe the performance improvements as “unnatural” and pointed to athletes from cycling and long distance running as evidence that people are catching onto the supplement and using it for a competitive advantage.

A company spokesman, speaking off the record, admitted that the product doesn't work overnight and that most athletes won't see the extreme performance enhancements for 3-4 weeks. In a world infatuated with instant success, that kind of realistic admission might cost some sales but is likely to keep customers happy.

While the controversy over the advantage athletes using EPO-BOOST® are obtaining is unlikely to go away anytime soon, one thing is for sure; blood doping and synthetic drugs are a thing of the past now that amateurs and professionals alike can tap into a natural product that generates Olympian-like strength and endurance.

Any athlete can use EPO-BOOST® without a prescription and without changing a diet or exercise regimen. The company offers an unparalleled guarantee. Athletes can use the product for a full 90 days and if not completely satisfied, send back whatever product is remaining - even an empty bottle - and get a ‘no questions asked’ refund.

A company spokesman confirmed a special offer: if you order this month, you'll receive Free Enrollment into the company's Elite Athlete Club where you'll qualify to receive a full 25% discount on all your bottles of EPO-BOOST®. And so you don't go a day without EPO-BOOST® in your system - increasing your endurance, you'll automatically receive a fresh bottle every 30-days. There are no minimum amounts of bottles to buy and you can cancel at any time. You can order EPO-BOOST® today at www.EPOBOOST.com or by calling 1-800-780-4331.



Mangieri has moved on from BMX riding to mountain biking, but don't try to take away his Vans.

THE PEGORETTI OF PIZZA

Anthony Mangieri, 43, helped introduce Neapolitan-style pies to the United States. Whether he's riding the gravel roads of Italy's Strade Bianche or manning his oven, the outspoken and obsessive owner of Una Pizza Napoletana in San Francisco is all about the long game. BY MEGAN GILLER

What came first, pizza or cycling?

I loved pizza as a little kid, and I started BMX racing in first or second grade. My town's bike shop had a BMX team, and every weekend we'd go racing all over New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In the winter it would be indoor racing on concrete, with a jump made out of plywood. We'd spray hairspray on our tires because we thought it gave them better traction. I was a kid of the '80s, and I've pretty much stayed that way. Sometimes people say, "I can't believe you're still wearing those Vans!" I'm like, "I made it this far being completely immature, so why would I change?"

What kind of bike do you have?

I ride a Steve Potts 29er singlespeed mountain bike and a Retrotec 26-inch singlespeed. As for road bikes, lately I've been riding a lugged Steelman and a Pegoretti Duende. I've also been riding a Richard Sachs cyclocross bike. I'm a huge fan of Sachs and Pegoretti!

Where do you usually go?

I like the loops in the Marin Headlands and Mount Tamalpais. But if I have a whole day to ride, I drive up to Nevada City. You can park at the Edwards Crossing Bridge at the South Yuba River, climb

the dirt road to the Rim Trail in this old miner town, North Bloomfield, and then take the South Yuba Trail along the river. I end the ride at the bridge, swim in the river, then get Thai food in Nevada City.

For those of us who don't know, what exactly is Neapolitan pizza?

A Neapolitan pizza crust is made from naturally leavened dough (sourdough) that is never refrigerated, and baked in a hot, wood-fired oven. It's light and uneven in the crust with charring from the fire, and it's topped with simple but high-quality ingredients.

How did you get into making it?

I was obsessed with pizza even when I was 14 or 15. I'd have my mom drive me to any place I had read about. I was so crazy, I'd make pizza every day. My dad and I built a brick oven in the backyard. I'd been baking in a home oven before that, and I realized that was the secret, the oven.

As soon as I got out of high school, I knew that's what I was going to do. I opened a bread bakery when I was 20, making naturally leavened bread. It was just me working there, and my mom would pick me up when I was done because I didn't have a car. I wasn't making any money and I was living at home. The

brick oven sat in my parents' backyard for years. It actually became a house for squirrels.

In a recent documentary, you say that both pizza makers and bike makers are artisans. How so?

It's doing the same thing over and over for so many years. Most Americans think they can learn stuff in 10 minutes and then move on to the next thing, but it's superficial knowledge. There's a huge difference between someone like that and Bruce Gordon or Richard Sachs, people who have been building bicycles for 40 years.

“
I WAS SO
CRAZY, I'D
MAKE PIZZA
EVERY DAY. I
REALIZED THE
SECRET WAS
THE OVEN.”

Is pizza healthy?

Extremely, if it's made a certain way. Americans have this idea that white flour has no nutrition. That's based on the bleached flour they grew up eating. White flour can still be healthy. If there's no commercial yeast in it and you don't refrigerate it, you can get an interesting depth of flavor and your body can more easily digest the nutrition.

What are some tips for people making pizza at home?

Most people don't have a wood-burning oven, so I wouldn't recommend trying to duplicate a Neapolitan pizza. Go for the home style: That's what people in Italy would do. Use a pan and make it square. The longer the dough rises and the wetter it is, the more flavor and better structure it will have.

What's the best food and riding experience you've ever had?

Three years ago I was in Siena, Italy, and I decided to ride the Strade Bianche course unaccompanied. It wasn't race time, but the route is permanently marked. It was one of the greatest and most miserable days of my life. I was so starving at one point that I climbed a fence and was eating grapes in someone's vineyard.



ROUBAIX

*A sub-1200g frame, meet the rocket ship
that'll make you rethink aluminum.*



— H O W — T O — W I N — T H E — I N T E R N E T

THESE 107
PERSONALITIES,
BRANDS, PLATFORMS,
AND INITIATIVES
EXPERTLY HARNESS
THE ALMIGHTY POWER
OF SOCIAL MEDIA
TO TRANSFORM THE
WAY ALL OF US RIDE.
MEET OUR NECESSARILY
RANDOM, UNRANKED,
COMPLETELY SUBJECTIVE
COLLECTION OF CYCLING'S
DIGITAL SUPERSTARS.

@TheRadavist

BARELY 10 YEARS AGO, John Watson was working in an architecture firm in New York City. Today, he runs *The Radavist*, an influential cycling blog that produces enough revenue for it to be his day job, and to pay contributors too.

Watson, now based in Austin, Texas, has had unusual staying power in social media, where personalities or memes tend to get hot quickly and burn out just as fast. His longevity derives from two primary assets: Rather than chase other people's notions of a trend, he focuses on themes and ideas that are important to him personally, which themselves change, which then refresh the site. He's also open to reinventing his approach, such as when he abandoned the popular *Prolly Is Not Probably* blog title and format in favor of the more expansive, but unknown, *The Radavist*.

"I was tired of *Prolly* being narcissistic, this site about one cycling experience," says the 34-year-old Watson. When he created *The*

Radavist, he consciously chose the title because it wasn't specific to cycling, and he opened the platform to other contributors. "I wanted a mix of voices and opinions," he says.

More contributors also means more content. Watson spends pretty much all day, every day, working on the site, but says, "I can't do it all myself." He doesn't plan the site's long-term vision or approach, preferring to focus on simply creating. "People say there's a balance between quantity and quality," he says. "I don't agree with that at all." But the lesson isn't just to throw content up; Watson routinely rejects submissions that don't meet his standards.

Few who stake a high-profile digital claim avoid controversy—and Watson has not been immune. Last fall, he was involved in a spat that spiraled out of CrossVegas, where he photographed fans spraying pro racers with beer from the sidelines, and posted the images on Instagram. Although Watson insists he was a) sober and, b) just shooting photos, things quickly got personal on both sides. His takeaway: Be positive, and if the discussion degenerates, just disengage. "Nothing good comes from arguments on social media," he says.—Joe Lindsey

CYCLING KICKSTARTERS WE LOVE

BITLOCK // This U-lock uses your smartphone as a key, allowing you to locate your bike, share access to it, and even track your ride stats.

BUCA BOOT // A stylish, lockable box for the back of your bike that fits everything from a six-pack to a laptop.

CLEAN BOTTLE SQUARE 2.0 // Everyone needs an easy-to-clean, fruit-infusing, self-filtering bottle, and that's probably why this Kickstarter raised more than double its goal.

HELIOS BARS // This smart handlebar features an integrated headlight and blinker system, turn-by-turn directions, bike tracking, and a visual speedometer.

KEIRIN CUT JEANS // US track national champion Beth Newell launched this denim brand to fit the muscular quads of cyclists.

SEE SENSE // A rear-facing bike light that can detect if you're at an intersection, traveling in low light, or being approached by a car with headlights. It responds by adjusting its brightness and flash rate to make you more visible.—Elspeth Huyett



WHO TO FOLLOW



@AdamMyerson

A fixture in the New England cycling scene for decades as a racer, coach, and promoter, **Adam Myerson** has just about seen it all. While sometimes polarizing, his outspoken take is always thought-provoking.

alpsandes.com

Colombian native **Klaus Bellon** brings an intimate familiarity to his blog devoted (mostly) to Colombia's pro-cycling history and renaissance.

@ARTCRANK

Fundamentally, Artcrank is a traveling art show featuring bike posters. "But what we really want to be is a gateway drug for art and cycling," says founder **Charles Youel**, who has been hosting these "pop-up" events since 2007. Twitter and then

Instagram helped spread the word, says Youel, but he insists the goal is to get people to show up in real life, "not just click something in the middle of the night to get what they want."

@bahatiracing

Former US national criterium champion, **Rahsaan Bahati**, uses on-board cameras to capture the action from within a race, then posts it to YouTube with voiceover play-by-play. It might be the best class on how to race bikes you could ever take.

Benedicto.co

This popular bike-adventure site founded by Portland, Oregon-based photographer **Daniel Sharp** includes stunning imagery, practical gear and travel advice, and colorful,

but not hyperbolic, storytelling.

Betsy Andreu

For years, **Betsy Andreu** was known by adjectives bestowed on her by Lance Armstrong: jealous, crazed, obese, to name a few. But her dogged pursuit of truth helped reveal Armstrong's lies. She has since become a standard-bearer: not merely for anti-doping, but for a kind of honesty and truthfulness that some see lacking today. Andreu holds forth most often on Facebook.

@BikePortland


Founder, publisher, and editor of *BikePortland.org*, **Jonathan Maus** is a powerful voice in one of America's great cycling-friendly cities and the larger advocacy world.

@BikePretty Melissa Davies

ditched walking in heels around San Francisco for riding in them. London-based **Kelly Miller** has an expert eye for vintage fashion. Together they are Bike Pretty, an online source for cycling style, event announcements, outfit ideas, and tips such as how to ride in a long skirt.

@bokanev

The key to accumulating nearly 19,000 Instagram followers? "Road porn," says up-and-coming Seattle-based photographer **Andy Bokanev**. "I'd love to go to France or Italy and ride legendary roads all the time, but it's just as cool to find undiscovered places outside your door. I want my photos to inspire people to get outside and ride."



JOHN'S FAVORITE INSTAGRAMMERS

@fyxo

Down Under is a long ways away, yet Andy White of FYXD brings us right into what Melbourne's cycling culture has to offer.

@rmdub

With his impeccable eye for roadscape photography, Ryan Wilson's stream relays a feeling of isolation to the comfort of your home.

@shifterbikes

Danny Hale exists on Instagram because your mechanic needs inspiration for how to route his cables.

@ultraromance

There are very few nomadic souls these days and Benedict is the poster child for the revival that's needed to free all of us from our possessions.

A full-page photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black cycling jersey with white horizontal stripes and the word 'ÉGALITÉ' on the sleeves. She is standing next to a black and orange road bicycle. The background is a desert landscape with mountains and trees, illuminated by the warm light of a sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

KATHRYN RECOMMENDS

"I like anyone who speaks their mind respectfully. And if you can make me laugh, I'm a follower for life. **Voxwomen** is a news feed that shows broadcasts of women's racing.

@jasongay of the *The Wall Street Journal* and **@JulietMacur** of *The New York Times* are great, too."

CHRIS HINKLE

THE ACTIVIST

@KathrynBertine

IF THE LAST FEW years are any indication, the lack of equity between men's and women's professional cycling finally may have met its match in **Kathryn Bertine**. This 40-year-old Tucson-based pro cyclist (currently with BMW p/b Happy Tooth) is also a writer, filmmaker (her documentary *Half the Road* explores the inequalities faced by professional female racers), and an advocate who is a driving force behind Le Tour Entier, the organization that last year helped create the La Course by Le Tour de France, a women's circuit race held in Paris on the Tour's final day. And she's an expert at harnessing social media to drive change.

Without Twitter neither *Half the Road* nor *La Course* would exist. We crowdsourced the film budget through Indiegogo, and spread the word via Twitter and Facebook. We were funded by more than 16 different countries and nearly 700 donations. It wouldn't have happened without sharing, liking, and however else the Internet elves communicate. Same with *La Course*. It was Change.org and Twitter that got the world to sign nearly 100,000 names.

I'm on social media every day to see what's happening not just in women's cycling, but in women's issues across the globe. It's important to make sure people understand that equality in sport isn't just about sports, but the larger picture of what we need to do to move our world forward.

Training is the easy part. I get out early and get that job done first. Then I'm on the computer looking for ways to support myself so I can keep the advocacy going.

I keep a list of 'Names I've Been Called on Social Media.' Some of it is nice. Some of it is not publishable. Sometimes I question why I do this, but when someone says I've helped in some way, that keeps me going.

Ultimately, social media is a metaphor for life—it's what we make of it. Personally, I'd like to keep using social media for good. If the price of progress comes interspersed with cat videos, so be it. Stepping back and getting in touch with the big picture is important before tackling another huge endeavor. No one wants a crazy person at the helm of advocacy.—*Whit Yost*

TRENDING

#atmo #baaw #bicichic #bikelife
 #bikelove #bikeporn #bikesonfurniture
 #cyclinglife #cyclofemme #dawnpatrol
 #foreverbuttpictures #fromwhereiride
 #getsomeoneriding #happinesswatts #lightbro
 #makebikeportraits #newbikeday #outsideisfree
 #owntheroad #ridelikeagirl #rideyourbike
 #roadslikethese #seekandenjoy #seenwhileriding
 #shoesockcombo #stravaphoto #thistagisforbikepics
 #todaysride #todaysturn #wymtm
 #yourrideyourrules

WHO TO FOLLOW (cont'd)

@CadenceClothing

In 2003, artist and former bike messenger **Dustin Klein** launched an apparel line because he didn't see anything for cyclists that wasn't a racing kit. Cadence Collection was one of the first lifestyle brands for cyclists ("we are the originators of cycling denim" says the website). Beyond innovation, we just really like Klein's design aesthetic. "He never seems to follow a trend," says BICYCLING art director Colin McSherry. "It is all about his art."

@ChrisRiekert

As a PR guy at Specialized, **Chris Riekert** helped lead the California-based bike manufacturer into new marketing territory with campaigns such as #SeekAndDiverge, a bike launch pushed out primarily through social media. The Big Red S has the largest social following of the major bike companies, and Riekert himself has more than 11,000 Instagram followers, thanks to a keen eye, mad selfie-stick skills, and liberal access to rad bikes.

@_Cycle_Chic

Mikael Colville-Andersen's blog copenhagen-cycle-chic.com not only launched a revolution in how cities treat bicycle infrastructure, but also managed to pare down the broad concept of everyday cycling into one word—Copenhagenize.

@cyclingfans

Pete Geyer's website cyclingfans.com is a one-stop shop for live cycling coverage, with direct links to feeds from every broadcaster of note, plus start lists, maps, and links to stories.

@Cyclochelle

Keep an eye on recent Dartmouth grad, former US under-23 national criterium champion, and BMW p/b Happy Tooth rider **Michelle Khare**. Hired at Buzzfeed fresh out of college, she knows a thing or two about making viral videos. Google "bike races Ferrari."

@CycloFemme

Looking for a way to accentuate the positive rather than dwell on the negative, Boulder, Colorado-based **Sarai Snyder** launched CycloFemme four years ago. Billed as a global women's cycling day, and held annually on Mother's Day, the hashtag-driven event last year included 303 rides in 31 countries.

@DennisChristo4

The guy who brought Dave Stohler to life in *Breaking Away* (actor **Dennis Christopher**, now 59) still really, really loves cycling.

@dwuori

If you're looking for a guilt-free guffaw in the form of a timely gif or a not-so-serious—but always insightful—look at the sport, *VeLo* backpage columnist **Dan Wuori** is your guy.



THE ORIGIN OF #ATMO

Sachs's signature phrase (which, in case you haven't figured it out, stands for "according to my opinion") is a ready-made hashtag. It's at once a brand, a statement, and a joke—a way to skewer people who attempt to display a command of a topic they don't really have. It's become inextricably linked to Sachs's brand, although he tries to limit using it to once or so a post. "Some people hate it," he says. "Some think it's funny and I've even had people tell me that they started it." That would be according to *their* opinion.



THE ICONOCLAST

@rscycles

A SOLITARY (some would say monastic) builder of retro-seeming steel frames is about the last person you'd expect to be a master of social media. And a guy with no staff, who does all his own work, is also the last person you'd expect to be a prolific user of same because social is a giant time suck and, hey, the bikes aren't gonna build themselves, right? But 62-year-old **Richard Sachs**, the literal torchbearer of American framebuilding, is both.

Rarely a day goes by that the Warwick, Massachusetts-based Sachs isn't present on Facebook, Twitter, or Velocipede Salon, the frame-building forum he helped start—many times all of the above. Sometimes he's answering questions or posting a comment, but often as not, he links to photos and even long, thoughtfully written posts.

Many of Sachs's posts tend to be simple, short items—a single photo of a current frame project or even a sock design, for example, with a gnomic, four-word ►

THE ECLECTIC →

@taylorphinney

caption. He's been shooting for years and is particularly fond of detailed macrofocus photography. And sometimes the images are not original, but re-posts of others' work (with attribution, of course).

Sachs can, and regularly does, cross-post to multiple platforms with the click of a button. All of this has the effect of making him seem omnipresent. He's not; he's just really efficient. In fact, his prolific flow of content contains a fair bit of recycled material. On April 1, he put a "mission statement" on Facebook that made the rounds on social as others picked it up. Sachs laughs. "No one ever looks at the post date," he says. It was 2013. (The item was actually a spoof mission statement, too, which he says people also didn't understand.)

What about all the replies? The questions and conversations? Doesn't keeping up with the constant fire hose of information drive him batty? Nope. First, he controls his hardware access. "I don't have a mobile device," he says. "I have the laptop open at the shop and if I get an e-mail, I can respond. But I step as far away as possible at times."

Sachs laughs when he adds that he has the e-mail notifications on his social accounts delivered straight to his spam folder. "When I post something, that's it," he says. "Unless I come back to that post later for some reason, I don't see the comment notifications." He conducts all business via e-mail, partly to ensure a written record of communication and partly because it reduces the channels he has to respond in.

Social, he says, "doesn't consume anywhere near the entire day. Even with the screen open to the places I haunt, the interaction isn't as 24-7 as you might think."—J.L.

FROM THE BEGINNING, the Taylor Phinney story sold itself: Prodigal son of Olympic cycling gold-medalist mother and Tour de France stage-winning dad takes up family pastime and immediately excels, winning multiple national and world championships.

Success has been more fleeting since his 2011 jump to the pro ranks, where he rides for the BMC Racing Team. The 25-year-old is in the midst of a long rehab following a horrific crash at last year's US national championships. But Phinney remains one of cycling's most popular riders in person and online. His quirky, part goofball, part coiffed-hair-cool persona has netted him a significant following: roughly 123,000 on Twitter and 46,000 on Instagram.

Phinney is usually good for at least a tweet a day, posting 11,400 times since joining in 2008. But he says he's not a "slave to likes."

"You can't focus on that stuff too much," says the Boulder, Colorado-based Phinney. "At the end of the day it's meaningless. You don't get anything from it except a little ego boost." Here is Phinney's strategy for social-media domination:

Have a sense for people and be able to read a room on a much bigger scale. Some people never get that and don't connect with people. I used to get more negative messages, but I made some small changes as I grew my internet persona. You'll get a sense of what works on Twitter and what doesn't, and what is the best time to post. I aim for that time when America is just waking up, but Europe hasn't gone to sleep yet.

Everybody has a story or something interesting to say. For me, just being real and a little weird and a little goofy works because that is who I am. I'm not afraid to share difficult moments or inspiring things or funny stuff. That is what social media is about, putting forward a part of yourself that people can relate to.

Post a lot of bike shots. I know they'll get more likes than art or music or the other things that interest me. You just have to find a balance. Post what you know people want to see, and also what you really want to share. Find that middle ground between pleasing your followers and pleasing yourself.—Jason Sumner

WHO TO FOLLOW (cont'd)

@emilymayer

A relative newcomer to cycling photography (she started in 2011 after snagging a press pass to the Tour of California), Los Angeles-based

Emily Mayer gives the small moments in cycling indelible impact. With a background in ballet (her mom founded a studio) and a lifelong interest in the history of pro cycling, she fills her Instagram with visual testaments to the grace and dedication both pursuits demand.

@f_cancellara

Switzerland might have four official

languages, but when it comes to Twitter, Swiss cycling superstar **Fabian Cancellara** speaks only "Fabianese," a rough English that's probably garbled further by autocorrect.

@fuckyeahcycling

Leave it to the Internet to bring together two "30-something" women from across the globe (one from Scotland, the other from Michigan) with a passion for cycling, into one Tumblr. As its title suggests, the blog unabashedly celebrates everything that makes cycling awesome.

@GoZwift

Nearly 70,000 people requested beta access to this multiplayer online training community where members compete with other cyclists on indoor trainers in a virtual 3D world. "We're a convergence of the trends in cycling toward social engagement and increased safety," says Zwift cofounder and CEO **Eric Min**.

@hizokucycles

They sell T-shirts, and not even great ones, but their Instagram account is incredible: highly 'shopped, but strikingly conceived images of roads

with lots of daily inspiration.

@IamtheSecretPro

Since 2012, the Secret Pro has been giving readers of Australian website Cyclingtips.com an unfiltered glimpse into the life, thoughts, and feelings of a pro cyclist.

@inrng

Pro cycling's most knowledgeable pseudonym is as prolific as he is unknown. There is no shortage of cycling bloggers, but what makes The Inner Ring notable is the writer's sure grasp of the sport. Don't let the plain language fool you: It's a



WAY OUT WE
(HIDE)

TAYLOR RECOMMENDS

@MarkCavendish
Cavendish is funny and his tweets honestly reflect who he is as a person—a genuine, self-deprecating, and kindhearted man.

@dr_woo_ssc
Whether you are into tattoos or not, Dr. Woo is a fun artist to follow on Instagram. His posts showcase his amazing work and also his great fashion sense.

@thefatjewish
on Instagram is easily the most hilarious account out there.



CHRISTIAN THORMANN

← THE TASTEMAKERS

@prettydamndfast

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN two cyclists, fashion-industry insiders, and best friends create a digital destination focused on the intersection of women's cycling and style? They surprise themselves by making a massive splash in the male-dominated sea of arbiters of cycling cool.

"We wanted to shine a spotlight on women who were doing fantastic things and inspiring us," says cofounder **Anna Maria Diaz-Balart** (left), 31, of New York City. "We felt like we were part of something really great and wanted to share that."

What started on Tumblr in 2012 and launched as a website (pretty-damnedfast.com) just last year is now

an established forum featuring a mix of artfully shot gear reviews, inspirational rider profiles, how-to guides (think cyclist beauty hacks), and service (check out the irreverent nutrition series "F#ck Brunch").

The content, despite being a hybrid of everything from urban to competitive, maintains a high level of sophistication. "We didn't want a tagline, but if we did it would be: 'Women's cycling in every form especially when it's done with style,'" says cofounder **Tayler Rae Dubé**, 25, who recently relocated from New York City to Los Angeles.

"Right now, it's a labor of love," she says. "At some point, if it could be a full-time thing, great."—*Molly Ritterbeck*

ANNA MARIA

I used it as a Tumblr where I just collected imagery, and I toyed with the idea of putting it on a hat.

ON THE NAME

It's fun to say, 'Oh, that girl is pretty damned fast!' And it's descriptive of what we stand for.

When we started getting feedback, it gave us chills. We thought, 'OK. We're on to something here.'

ON EXPECTATIONS

We didn't know how it would be received. We're pulling together two worlds [fashion and feminism] that conflicted in the past.

Some find putting aside beauty and fashion is liberating; some take pleasure beating a guy up the bridge in heels. It's whatever makes you feel powerful.

ON FEMINISM IN CYCLING

There's a lot of 'I don't want big thighs' or 'I'm a girly girl.' I think what you're judged by on a bike is if you're out there and loving it whether in lipstick or barefaced.

There's no right way to look when you're riding your bike. Cycling is a natural expression of personal style.

ON CYCLING STYLE

For me, cycling is an outlet to have fun and experiment. I like to play with patterns and colors.

@abbylwatson always rides with rad ladies in gorgeous places. @austinhorse does epic stuff with a social-good purpose. @kellisam is a badass and has tiny dogs like me!

ON THEIR INFLUENCES

@cyclekitspiration for amazing outfits. @atnkatdaley is always doing crazy things—and she's a cancer survivor. @babyqueso is an epically cute style icon.

TAYLER

WHO TO FOLLOW (cont'd)

sophisticated look at pro cycling.

@jeredgruber
@ashleygruber

Whether they're capturing the sweeping public spectacle that is professional bike racing or their own private moments on bikes, husband-and-wife photographers **Jered and Ashley Gruber** somehow make every Instagram seem epic.

@L_ArmiTstead
Great Britain's **Lizzie Armitstead** is one

of a handful of women looking to challenge Marianne Vos's supremacy at the top of the sport. With more than 100,000 Twitter followers, she's already defeated her Dutch rival in one key area.

@manualforspeed

Imagine a super-group of Prince, Nirvana, Lady Gaga, Stevie Wonder, Garth Brooks, and Public Enemy. Now try to imagine what their music might sound like. That's how hard it is to describe MFS's take on pro cycling. The brainchild of photographers **Emiliano Granado** and **Daniel Wakefield Pasley**, it's weird, creative, and somehow just right.

@marianne_vos

When she's not winning races, multitime world champ **Marianne Vos** is promoting women's cycling via her 100,000+ followers and fans across platforms.

@nolifelikethislife

This photo-driven bike-adventure blog

is an homage to living life in the present. "It's important for people to stop and take a look around and appreciate what they have going on," says founder **JP Bevens**, a New York City-based photographer.

@olegtinkov

If you can withstand the crushing gravitational force of the Tinkoff-Saxo pro team owner's black-hole narcissism on Twitter, you may observe the quasar-like stream of high-energy emissions, often in English. **Oleg Tinkov** will offend you at some point, but his feed is a phenomenon worthy of Nova.

@PedalingNowhere

This digital destination focused on bike-packing and dirt-road touring, routes, and gear has become a hub for the long-distance cycling community. "You don't have to ride for weeks on end to find adventure," says founder **Logan Watts**.

@petosagan

His antics can be controversial, but **Peter Sagan's** more than 250,000 Twitter followers (and 336,000 Facebook fans) prove that it's hard to ignore the 25-year-old Slovakian sprinter.

@_pigeons_
UK-based **Sarah Connolly** calls

herself "just a fan-girl" but she, along with collaborator **Dan Wright** (@Dan-WOfficial), runs the Unofficial Unsponsored Women's

THE COMMUNITY BUILDER

@ellyblue

WHEN ELLY BLUE started planning the stops on her first book tour in 2010, all the details came together except one—she hadn't actually written a book yet. That propelled her to crank out her first 'zine, *Sharing the Road with Boys*. It became the first of her feminist-focused "Taking the Lane" series, which she distributed through one successful Kickstarter after another.

Most of the fodder for that "big impassioned essay," as Blue describes it, came from her experiences with sexism in cycling. Blue, 37, had initially been involved locally in Portland, Oregon's "oddball" bike community at events like BikeFun and Critical Mass, before

starting to write for more mainstream outlets like BikePortland.org and BICYCLING.com. "When I started writing for more of a sports-cycling audience, I was like, whoa, there's this huge agreement about cycling out there that I don't agree with at all," she says. "That was fun because it gave me a lot to write about."

Her crowd-funding successes may be her biggest social-media win, but Blue says it's her annual "Dinner and Bikes" tours that have proven the most reliable way to reach people. She and a small group of advocacy leaders take Amtrak around the United States. Each stop brings together members of local bike communities, often ones who have never even met face to face. "The best kind of engagement is actually getting people together in a room to talk," she says.—*Caitlin Giddings*



ELLY RECOMMENDS

@PathLessPedaled does great Instagram. They promote bike touring with beautiful photography. **@annabrones** lives in Paris, and ties a range of interests, from bikes to food to publishing, into a seamless and unpretentious whole on Instagram. My friend **@amysue** got me on Twitter in the first place. She's not promoting anything, just being herself.

WHO TO FOLLOW (cont'd)

UCI Cycling Blog (prowomenscycling.com), a clearinghouse of race reports, interviews, and video from the women's pro peloton.

@rapha

When **Simon Mottram** and **Luke Scheybeler**

launched Rapha in 2004, they managed to push people and competing brands toward a clean, simple look and (largely) straightforward clothing. One of the first cycling companies to embrace content marketing, Rapha became a textbook example of how to create a brand that seems like it has a long heritage and legacy, but is actually quite new.

@Rodeo_Labs

This combo race team, club, and movement started when a group of Colorado cyclists decided they didn't want to be told how or where to ride. The team counts more than 300 members from around the globe. "There is no functional benefit to tribalism in cycling," says founder **Stephen Fitzgerald**. "If it involves two wheels, it's cool, and most importantly it's fun."

@SocialPeloton

This nascent crowd-sourced initiative plans to bring cyclists together for an online experience that blends the best of Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Planned launch: July 2015.

@spinlister

This peer-to-peer bike-rental platform

launched in New York City in 2012 and now has listings in more than 60 countries. "Promoting the use of idle capacity is a benefit for everyone," says CEO **Marcelo Loureiro**. "Listers make money and renters spend less and can travel light."

@Strava

The popular endurance sports-oriented social platform has transformed the way people ride. "We've tapped into the universal human need to not be out there in the world in isolation," says president and cofounder **Michael Horvath**.

@TenspeedHero

Deploying a rotating roster of students, photography professors **Luke Batten** (University of Illinois) and **Jonathan Sadler** (Boise State University) run a fanciful blog that is at once a paean to cycling tradition and a celebration of whimsy. It's now also a thriving apparel business thanks in part to being one of the first to capitalize on the cycling-sock obsession.

@theamandabatty

Pro downhiller **Amanda Batty's** viral "Why I'm Leaving Pinkbike" post was a response to bike-industry bro culture. But Batty isn't just firing off complaints from the sidelines—she's actively trying to change the industry with Proving Possible, which funds entry fees for first-time women downhill racers.

@danny_macaskill

SIX YEARS AGO, Danny MacAskill was working in a bike shop in Edinburgh, Scotland. In his spare time, he practiced tricks on his trials bike, something he'd been doing since he was 11. During that span he'd made just one video of significance, an edit that he says, "kind of went viral on Myspace."

Then MacAskill's riding buddy Dave Sowerby (also an ace videographer) busted his leg. Forced off the bike, Sowerby offered to shoot another video with MacAskill. The rest, as they say, is history.

Powered by MacAskill's jaw-dropping ability to ride his bike up, down, on, and over all manner of objects, and backed by a mesmerizing song by Band of Horses, the *Inspired Bicycles* video spread across the Internet, racking up

350,000 views in its first 40 hours. It's since exceeded 36 million. Subsequent videos starring MacAskill have enjoyed similar success.

"I never imagined this," admits MacAskill, now 29, who is arguably the world's best-known bike rider. "I was just trying to make a credible street-trials video. The only opinions I cared about were from the local trials community."

Today, he earns a handsome salary making several videos a year for sponsors that include Red Bull, GoPro, POC, and EVOC. His notoriety transcends his sport.

"Fame is a strange thing," says MacAskill. "It didn't really hit me until I started meeting people from all over the world who had watched the videos, and that brought it home. I'm incredibly lucky."—J.S.

DANNY'S VIDEO TIPS

Get the right perspective. Keep the camera horizontal, and think about angles and scale.

Tell a story. Build in a theme and try to present a sense of being on a journey. If you can include some kind of story in the video it will make it a lot more fun to watch.

Choose a soundtrack.

Find music that feels right for you and the video you are making.

Be perfect—at least once.

I may try a trick a hundred times and land it only once or twice until I get it right. You have to make sure the riding is something you are 100 percent happy with.



THE ARTIST →

@Garrett_Chow

EVEN AMONG THE COOL, this guy is cool. And fast. Especially on a track bike snaking through rush-hour traffic in San Francisco. (Google “MASH SF 2007” for compelling video evidence, and a little adult language.)

Since 2007, **Garrett Chow** has worked with Mash SF, a bike-racing team/creative-branding agency of sorts that helped revive Cinelli using a mixture of artsy paint jobs and clever marketing. MASH SF also sells everything from stickers and patches to stems, handlebars, and backpacks, all emblazoned with the MASH SF lightning-bolt logo that’s become an underground symbol of cycling coolness.

The Bay Area-based graphic designer with jet-black hair did a stint at Specialized from 2008 to 2013 that included creating one-off bikes for the likes of Tom Boonen and three-time cyclocross world champ Zdenek Stybar. He’s widely credited with bringing street art, graffiti style, and skateboard culture to the world of bike design.

“The bike industry is great at rehashing the same old things,” says the 40-something Chow. “I look for inspiration outside of it, in fashion, in art. A lot of things interest me more than what other bike brands are doing.”

It only makes sense that Chow’s perspective resonates the strongest on the most visual of social-media platforms, Instagram, where he has nearly 15,000 followers. “I don’t have a website or any other way to show my work,” he says. “And I don’t pursue work; it finds me. Instagram is my portfolio.”—J.S.

**GARRETT'S
INSTAGRAM TIPS**

Be genuine.

It's easy to recognize when you're not. I don't post a lot of food or cat photos. I use Instagram to show off what I'm working on.

Stick with a POV.

At the same time don't constantly ask yourself, 'Is this on brand?' Use your intuition and ask, 'Is this appropriate for me as a human?'

Compose a good

photo. It also helps if a deeper meaning comes through. It has to look great, but it can't just be cake decoration. If you don't have anything to say, don't say anything.



@LadyVelo

YOU MAY NOT KNOW the name **Jools Walker**, but you may have read the Velo City Girl blog, followed @LadyVelo on Twitter, or lusted after a piece of Vulpine apparel. And behind—or in front of—all that is the London-based, 32-year-old operations manager at Vulpine, who rediscovered her love of cycling a few years ago (“getting back on a bike was a big deal,” she says), and has made commuting fashion into a career. “Before Vulpine, I wasn’t working in cycling, I wasn’t working in fashion, and I wasn’t very happy,” Walker says. “Social media genuinely has changed my life.”

The blog started as a journal. I never expected anyone to read it. It was an everyday lifestyle blog. The week I was going to get a bike, I decided to blog about it. The fashion lover in me was like, “Combine the two and turn it into a blog about cycle style.”

I geared it toward women like me, who were cycling for pleasure. You don’t have to be talented; you just have to enjoy being on the bike. There were already a few popular cycling blogs out there that inspired

me, like Copenhagen Cycle Chic. I didn’t start to compete with them.

It feels like an oversaturated market now. I worry that it’s going to get lost as so many keep popping up.

Looking good on the bike is great, but being comfortable so you enjoy riding is important. You don’t have to wear a flowing skirt to ride a Pashley, it’s whatever you feel comfortable in. You want to feel good and ride.

The change in cycling clothing in the past few years has been massive. The variation and variety available now is amazing. It was an alien concept, having clothes that you could wear and ride in.

When Vulpine launched in real time on Twitter, it meant that the brand could engage with cyclists on a grassroots level, and it felt inclusive and fun. It got across our genuine enthusiasm for all things cycling: no faking it, just say it. There was, and still is, an irreverent and cheeky sense of humor to the brand, which is expressed in our social media.

One thing that drew me to Vulpine founder Nick Hussey was how transparent and open he is. Sharing with the public when something goes wrong isn’t something that you see every day from most companies. It’s brave to say “whoops” to everyone on social media. It’s real, you know?—*Molly Hurford*

THE LANCE EFFECT

[IT’S NOT WHAT YOU THINK]

In the global Twittersphere, Lance Armstrong is a bit player. His following of 3.84 million is dwarfed, say, by pop singer Katy Perry’s 70 million plus. But in cycling, the former seven-time Tour de France winner (or current, according to his Twitter bio) is the original social-media superstar. Among those whose profile lists the infamous cyclist as one of their first follows: Rapha, Chris Horner, actor Matthew McConaughey, and BMC Racing Team president and general manager Jim Ochowicz.

Armstrong was an early adopter, joining Twitter in October 2008, two years after it launched. Since then, he’s tweeted more than 11,600 times, announcing the birth of a child, wishing Willie Nelson a happy birthday, mourning Robin Williams’s death, helping Brett Favre get a bike fit, and musing, “How can something as simple as the foam roller be so amazing?”

Armstrong has also used Twitter as a platform to first deny, then acknowledge, doping transgressions. Most recently, he issued a statement on the Cycling Independent Reform Commission Report, then posted the link on Twitter.

“I got on Twitter because of Lance,” says Taylor Phinney, who also joined in October 2008 and today has 123,000 followers. “We were together in Austin and he signed me up. He told me it was going to be the next Facebook.”—J.S.

WHO TO FOLLOW (cont’d)

@TheBicycleStory
Seattle-based writer and cyclist, **Josh Cohen**, has a knack for sussing out interesting riders and telling their stories.

@thejensie
Despite retiring in 2014, **Jens Voigt** has hardly disappeared. While his missives as a Trek ambassador can be entertaining, his most noteworthy updates come when he’s doing his most important job: being a dad. Whether making crafts or baking cookies, Mr. Shut Up Legs isn’t afraid to share his softer side

with his more than 200,000 followers.

@Vaughters
Cannondale-Garmin manager **Jonathan Vaughters** tweets on everything from racing to wine to fart jokes, and is one of the few team officials in pro cycling to regularly, enthusiastically engage with fans.

@veloclinic
Sports-medicine doctor and Cat 1 mountain bike racer **Mike Puchowicz**’s wide-ranging blog includes power-output modeling, redneck-haiku

commentaries, random riding shots—and plenty of anti-doping cynicism.

Willy Wauthlé
Dutchman **Willy Wauthlé** spent the last 35 years as a race-moto driver all over Europe, and knows many of the best photographers. In his free time, he posts and catalogs images on Facebook. The result? One of the world’s biggest collections of pro-cycling photography.

@WTFKits
Jonny Burns scours the Internet for cycling’s best and most bizarre kits. **B**

GOT SOMEONE TO ADD TO OUR LIST?

LET US KNOW ON TWITTER, FACEBOOK, OR INSTAGRAM!



**JOOLS
RECOMMENDS**

@vulpinecc


I was engaging with Vulpine before I was an employee because of Nick's enthusiasm for cycling.

@lovelybicycle

is another one I enjoy, really fresh and approachable.



MY MAMA TOLD ME NEVER TALK TO



FOR MUSICIAN BEN WEAVER,
PEDALING 1,500 MILES OVER THREE WEEKS
FROM GIG TO GIG IS THE ONLY WAY
HE KNOWS HOW TO STAY SANE.

BY JONATHAN MILES PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN DONNELL



**CRAZY
PEOPLE**



SOMEWHERE IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA, at a dilapidated filling station along the same Highway 49 that inspired Howlin' Wolf to wail, we pause for some water and a biscuit. It's midday, the autumn sun hangs high over acres of cotton stubble, in the far-off level distance a harvester crawls the tufted horizon. The day's planned mileage isn't arduous—60, and every one of them flat—but the riding has been jittery, tense. With no shoulders on Highway 49, and edge line rumble strips forcing us into the traffic lane, we spent the morning being buzzed by tractor-trailers and a species of ancient sedans that seems to exist only in the Delta.

The effects of this tension are perhaps evident on our faces when an elderly man asks where we're headed. His tone is helpful, even pitying, as though hoping we'll answer somewhere nearabouts so he can console us that we're almost there. Our response—the town of Greenwood, still some 40 miles to the south—instead provokes a surprised snort, then some chiding for us having acted, in our answer, “like that's nothing.” We try to retract some of our nonchalance, but having ridden all the way from Minnesota, we tell him, it feels a little like nothing.

“Minnesota?” he says, with popped eyes. He looks us up and down as he backs away. “Sorry, boys,” he tells us. “My mama told me never talk to crazy people.”

A 1,500-mile ride from St. Paul, Minnesota, to New Orleans, Louisiana, did sound crazy when the idea surfaced, but in that not-actually-crazy, feel-good way, like calling in sick from work to go to the beach. Yet certain elements of the ride might truly be a little crazy—and by this I mean my partner, a 35-year-old Minnesota singer-songwriter named Ben Weaver. Ben is touring in support of a new album, entitled *I Would Rather Be a Buffalo*. The Salsa Vaya bicycle he's straddling? It's his tour bus.

BEN WEAVER'S SONGS are not about cycling, or even traveling. They're about the things most songs are about: love, or the lack thereof; the highs and lows of existence, and all their attendant mysteries. They're gravelly, poetic, musically spare, often a little haunted. Their gritty moodiness stands in contrast to what cycling tends to evoke: sunshine, major chords, quick cadences. But then Weaver—whose thick build and scraggly beard give him the look of a 19th-century lumberjack—hews to few stereotypes of the modern cyclist. He has little interest in data points such as speed or mileage, he's fond of the occasional cigarette, and his primary source of refueling is Little Debbie snack bars. Yet cycling has become as integral to his life as music is—especially since he joined the two pursuits three years ago.



Perhaps the greatest pleasure is the most subtle: the rhythm that develops after days and days of riding. Ride, eat, play music, sleep, repeat. With this routine comes an animal clarity we rarely encounter in workaday life.

This tour—24 days of riding and 12 nights of shows—is the apotheosis of that merger. Weaver spent a decade and a half touring the standard way: driving a van from town to town, plugging in at clubs and bar-rooms, flopping in motel beds, and repeating this routine for weeks or sometimes months. But for this father of three, the routine curdled into a grind, with a day on the road feeling like two hours of joy bracketed by 22 hours of homesickness and boredom.



Weaver's banjo goes in a custom pannier, his guitar in a gig bag strapped on with bungee cords.

So thorough was his burnout that he even abandoned music for a while and took a job butchering pigs. When that trial separation didn't work—"the songs chased after me like rattling bones," he says—he tried a different tack: He strapped his guitar and banjo to his bike and started riding to shows. Local gigs, at first, but soon he was covering the Upper Midwest on his bike, and, he discovered, packing far more hours of joy into the touring grind.

After a while, the bike started to feel like a third instrument. He's ridden since he was a kid, back then pedaling a BMX bike off into the unknown for a taste of freedom—a mindset he hasn't really outgrown. Many of us, in our teens, switch to cars for conveying ourselves into that freedom zone, but that didn't happen to Weaver. For him, a bike represents freedom the way a '69 Chevy does for Bruce Springsteen. "It's more than a mode of transportation to me," he says. "It's part of who I am, at this point, which means it's part of what my music is."

Weaver isn't the first musician to experiment with pedal-powered touring. The Ginger Ninjas, a California folk-funk band, has done several bike tours, and Blind Pilot, a folk-pop band based in Portland, Oregon,

has done a couple as well. For them, bike touring was a link back to their more freewheeling busking days. For Weaver, though, it's more elemental than that. "A bicycle isn't exactly a Stone Age implement, but it's a link to something primitive," he says. "There's a primitive aspect to throwing yourself out into the weather and the landscape." Bicycle touring fits into a lo-fi, slow-food aesthetic—a way of encountering the world at its own natural speed. "I feel way more alive outside in 100-degree heat than I do in an air-conditioned room," he says. "It's not about environmentalism, or proving some point—all that stuff feels wushy to me. It's about having some kind of connection to the land, about getting some dirt under your nails."



THERE'S A LOT OF DISTANCE between using a bike for inspiration and using one as a tour bus on a monthlong tour—1,500 miles of difference, in fact. This comes into brutally sharp focus on the fourth day of the journey, during the 75 miles from Winona, Minnesota, to Viroqua,





OPPOSITE: Weaver plays a gig at Monk's in Dubuque, Iowa. **THIS PAGE:** The road from Clinton to Dubuque (top). Mapping 100 miles from Burlington, Iowa, to Hannibal, Missouri.



Wisconsin, where Weaver has an evening show scheduled. An earthly conspiracy thwarts us throughout the day: It begins with an unremitting headwind; it follows with rain; then an undulating landscape of hills. We're still many miles from Viroqua, riding through a dense fog, when nightfall settles on us, adding another layer of weight. It feels dicey riding on slick, black, lonesome back roads past lightless Amish farms. It's late-October cold, and the hills have turned my legs into useless Twizzlers. It's obvious we're not going to make it on time for the show and still unclear is how we're going to make it to Viroqua at all.

Weaver doesn't like making the call to the concert promoters, I can tell. The pickup-truck rescue they supply feels to him like a surrender to the elements, and he loves the elements. As Weaver recounts this ride and others onstage, I understand something about him: Bad trips make for good stories, as the old saw goes, yes, but in Weaver's mind bad trips also make for good trips—when you're on a bike and when it's nature impeding you.

This is plainly evident at a show in St. Charles, Missouri, which comes at the immediate end of a 102-mile ride—the second day of consecutive centuries in subfreezing weather. I'm flat-out depleted, a lurching Gumby of exhaustion, but Weaver seems almost refreshed by the ride of eight-plus hours, the last two of which involved more than 2,000 feet of climbing. The night's venue, the Bike Stop Café, is a combination

café and cycling shop, and, onstage, Weaver seems torn between singing and telling stories from the road; the songs meld into the journey, the journey into the songs. “Sorry,”

he finally says to the crowd, after describing riding down a country back road and scaring up what must've been 200 blackbirds, a particularly glorious brush with nature. “I guess I'm preaching to the choir here. But I like choirs. Choirs can be beautiful.”

This is the way Ben Weaver speaks: It's big talk, as opposed to small talk, with every conversational topic ransacked for its philosophical underpinnings, its submerged metaphors. Our conversations on the ride tend to follow this pattern: The sight of behemoth farm machinery provokes thoughts about extractive agriculture, a roadkill bobcat inspires thoughts about mortality (and, I suspect, a future song lyric), and every time Google Maps deposits us on some seven-mile stretch of rural gravel, Weaver unwinds on the limits of technology. Never once do I hear him curse a daylong 20-mph headwind, a frigid rain, the eight-mile climb leading out of Boscobel, Wisconsin, et cetera. But the seventh or eighth time Google Maps dumps us onto gravel, adding hours to our ride, I hear new curse words only a songwriter could invent.

This brings up one of the differences between a civilian's bike tour and a musician's bike tour. The itinerary isn't flexible—show time is show time, regardless of whatever setbacks arise, such as a foul Google Maps routing, on the small end of things; or, more problematically, the fierce pain that begins to wrack my right thigh halfway through the journey. For three days the pain grows worse, so that even the slightest incline is excruciating. We built a few off days into the schedule, but they're not movable; to lose, say, 80 miles to a forced rest day means making it up the next day, on top of whatever distance is scheduled. That the pain swiftly eases once I'm off the bike offers us a clue, however, and when we fractionally adjust my seat height, it fades away for good.

If some of the charms of a civilian bike tour are therefore restricted for us—spontaneous detours, sightseeing, roadside naps—it's almost never a slog. Perhaps the greatest pleasure is the most subtle (and musical) one: the rhythm that develops after days and days of riding. Ride, eat, play music, sleep, repeat. With this routine comes a kind of animal clarity, a singular purposefulness that we rarely encounter in the mayhem of workaday life. It's a gift proffered by the trip's long distance—neither Weaver nor I notice it until maybe 700 miles in, when, as Weaver puts it, “all the residue has blown off.” The high points (the generosity of strangers feeding and housing us along the way, the magical way a cold beer tastes after a 90-plus-mile ride, the companionship of the steadily fattening Mississippi River) get entangled with the low (the left crank arm falling apart on my bike, forcing me to pedal with one leg for a while, the aforementioned headwind that tried blowing us backward through much of Illinois, the steady dog chases we encounter once we pass the Mason-Dixon line), as mere drum flourishes in that steady downbeat rhythm.

Riding into the South, often on the mythical Highway 61, adds a new layer of texture to the trip—particularly when we enter the Mississippi Delta, the seedbed of blues and rock 'n' roll. This stretch turns any musician into a kind of pilgrim, and Weaver revels in a landscape that seems framed by an invisible treble clef. | CONTINUED ON P. 104



STOP

KILLIN'
YOUR



SHE WAS GREAT AT RIDING BICYCLES—BUT HAD NO CLUE HOW TO KEEP THEM ROLLING. HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM HER TRIP TO MECHANIC SCHOOL.

BY ELSPETH HUYETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN HAYNES

I'VE BEEN RACING BIKES SINCE I WAS 13, almost half my life. But until last year, I'd never worked on one.

When I was growing up, my dad took care of my equipment and bankrolled the maintenance. I knew that repairs had to be made, but I wasn't sure what they involved, or even how much they cost. The only thing I could do with a bike besides ride fast was change a flat.

After I graduated from college last spring and got a job at BICYCLING, it seemed silly to run home to ask Dad for help. So I didn't. I just kept riding, putting more miles on my bike than I ever had before. I didn't bother to clean it. Yes, I was also a little bit lazy.

Everything was going fine—until this past autumn when my shifting started acting up. I dropped the bike off at my local shop, assuming repairs would be minor, and that they'd be free since it was still under the shop's warranty. Because I was heading out of town, I asked my dad if he'd pick it up.

A few days into my trip, I received this text: "Got your bike, we need to talk."

Turns out that, because I had never lubed my chain (yes, really), I'd destroyed the cassette and chainrings. The cables were a frayed disaster—I guess that's why my shifting didn't work right—and also needed to be replaced. Total damage: \$350. As I dipped into my savings, I began calculating how many student-loan

payments I could have made and how many sushi dinners I'd have to skip. I wasn't ready to swear off spicy tuna rolls, so I had two choices: Either stop riding my bike (um, no) or make an honest effort to maintain it.

When you've been racing for 10 years, it's super awkward to say to a mechanic, "My bike isn't working and my dad doesn't know why." Relying solely on a bike shop was out—I was done being helpless. So, I set out to learn on my own (*it's just two wheels, it can't be that hard...*). I queued up a bunch of maintenance videos on YouTube, but it quickly became apparent that teaching myself was not going to happen (*...all those cables, and gears, and WTH are spoke nipples?!).*) Time for Plan B: wrench school.

When I walked into Marty's Reliable Bike Shop in Morristown, New Jersey, for my first of four 90-minute Park Tool School sessions, I was ashamed to admit that I had practically zero knowledge of how a bicycle works. But over the next four weeks, mechanic Rich Januszewski patiently walked me through everything from lubing a chain to truing a wheel. Some skills were harder than others (I'll leave the wheel truing to experts), but none was that difficult. I now know, for example, that even though adjusting a headset sounds scary, it involves just loosening and tightening a few bolts. I can handle that.

In the end, the hardest part was getting over my own ego. Now, when I hear some mysterious sound, it's a lot easier for me to identify the problem, and address it myself or coherently explain to a mechanic what the issue is, as opposed to babbling, "It's just kind of making this weird noise sometimes." Not having to run to my dad for every creak makes me feel independent and responsible. Plus, I learned that spending just 30 minutes a week on bike maintenance means I won't be hit with another huge repair bill.

Best of all: A well-maintained bike is way faster. Who knew? **B**

You Got This!

These 6 money-saving fixes are easier than you think—and will prolong the life of your bike



1 / Set up shop /

Before you can fix your bike, you need a few tools. Januszewski recommends a set of hex wrenches ranging from 1.5 mm to 10 mm and a preset torque wrench, so you don't overtighten bolts and crack your frame or components. A quality floor pump with a gauge is a necessity—you should check your tire pressure before every ride. And a workstand will give you easier access to all parts of your bike. **What you'll save** A lot—over time. After investing about \$350, you won't have to pay for simple repairs.



2 / Keep your bike clean /

A simple wipe-down can help you spot damage early, when it's most likely easier—and cheaper—to fix. Do this at least once a month: Avoiding the chain and cassette, spritz your bike with a spray cleaner like Bike Lust and wipe it off with a clean rag, checking for chips and cracks in the paint. If you notice any, take the bike to your local shop to confirm that the damage is only

cosmetic. Then it's time to give your chain some love (see below). **What you'll save** \$25 to \$45 per cleaning, depending on whether you have the drivetrain detailed



3 / Degunk your chain /

Dirt causes wonky shifting, tight chain links, and added wear on the derailleur and cogs, which are pricey to replace (trust me). To thoroughly clean your chain, all you need is a scrubber—a plastic gizmo filled with brushes and sponges that snaps into place around the chain (or an old kitchen sponge that has an abrasive side), cleaning solvent, and lube. Start by shifting your chain onto the middle or smallest front chainring and the smallest rear cog. Add cleaner to the fill line of the scrubber, or onto the sponge. Then attach the scrubber to the chain, or grip it with the rough side of your sponge, and spin the crank backward for about 30 pedal strokes. Remove the scrubber, rinse the chain with a gentle stream of water, wipe it dry with a cloth, then lubricate it. **What you'll save** \$10 for the labor



4 / Check chain wear /

Use a 12-inch ruler or a chain checker designed specifically for the task. With a chain checker, turn the gauge to zero and place both pins into the gaps between the links. Replace your chain when the reading hits about 0.75 percent. Or, hold a ruler up against the chain so that the first line is in the center of a pin. The last line on the ruler should also fall in the center of a pin. If the pin is between $\frac{1}{16}$ - and $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch over, you need a new chain. More than that? Start cassette shopping. **What you'll save** At least \$200, because neglecting your chain means you'll eventually have to replace your drivetrain



5 / Replace your brake pads /

If you hear a gritty sound when braking, if the brake-pad grooves have disappeared, or your braking ability has decreased, it may be time for new pads. Choose the right ones for your rims. Alloy- and carbon-specific brake pads exist for a reason:

They will protect your wheels and increase your braking ability. To change rim-brake pads, loosen the set screws in the pad holder with a hex wrench and slide out the pad. Then turn the brake-cable adjustment clockwise until it is fully screwed in, slide the new pad into the holder according to the directional arrow on the pad, and replace any screws. How long will they last? It depends on riding conditions, how often you brake, and—ahem—how clean you keep your bike. **What you'll save** \$15 for the labor



6 / Swap out cables /

This is one of the more advanced skills I learned, but it's worth knowing (and if I can do it, so can you). A broken cable could leave you stuck in one gear or, worse, without the ability to stop. Plan to replace your cables at the end of every riding season or when you notice them fraying, shifting becomes slow and inaccurate, or braking feels sticky. Learn how with our repair videos at BICYCLING.com/brakecables and BICYCLING.com/shifter-cables. Pro tip: To guide internally routed cables through the frame, pick up some 2mm cable lining at a bike shop, or use Park Tool's internal cable-routing kit. **What you'll save** \$15 for the labor—E.H.



CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO COURSE!

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VIVE LE **VÉLO!**

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GEAR

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OAKLEY JAWBREAKER

An old-school shape with
new-school tech **BY MIKE YOZELL**

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Oakley Jawbreaker



Oakley made its first sunglasses in 1984, based on the one-piece, wrap-around shape of its popular motocross (and BMX) goggles—a lineage that's apparent in its new Jawbreaker, which was designed in collaboration with Mark Cavendish of the Etixx Quick-Step pro team.

The name stems from the way the lower half of this frame hinges down to make it easy to swap between the 10 lenses (each for a specific lighting condition). The lens is huge and well-suited to the head-lowered, go-fast riding style. As a departure from the Radarlock XL glasses—Oakley's next closest model in terms of size—as well as a throwback to earlier designs, the brow of the Jawbreaker arches up in the middle. This provides excellent field of vision when you're looking up the road or trail.

The glasses fit snugly, and even high humidity or cold won't fog up the amply vented Prizm lens. The view is sharp and crystal clear, and lacks the shimmery quality that polarized lenses can sometimes impart. The lens seems to work with the color spectrum to enhance clarity and make certain features, like manhole covers or cracks in the road, stand out in sharper relief. The trail version of the Prizm offers

similar benefits, by deemphasizing certain colors in the spectrum to help riders better distinguish obstacles in low or variable light. One side note: After you wear the Jawbreakers for a bit, when you take them off, colors may seem washed out, similar to the effect of walking from inside to outside on a very sunny day.

The Jawbreaker may be Oakley's most complicated frame to date: It comprises 27 individual pieces, including a stout nose-piece that hinges open and closed for lens swapping. To customize fit, there are multiple nosepiece options, and the temples feature a simple latch to adjust the length by up to 15 mm. The temples aren't as robust as the ones on the Radarlock XL (my go-to shade for all-around riding), and because of this, they fit a tad looser on the cranium than I'm used to. It also made them a bit problematic to stow in helmet vents, until I got used to their dimensions.

Based on the strong reactions the Jawbreakers have gotten from other riders, the look of Oakley's newest shades is controversial—you either love or hate them, and they certainly look better with a helmet than without. But from a pure feature and performance standpoint, this is one of the better models the southern California company has debuted in years. \$200



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Scott Addict CX

Tool or toy?
You decide

Sometimes we become so fixated on the bikes and gear of cyclocross that we lose sight of the fact that equipment is secondary to the capability of the rider. The bike, in 'cross, is a tool. And as with any tool, only those who wield it most dexterously can wrest the best from it. In sure and steady hands, a good tool can make leaping the barriers or drilling down a slippery, off-camber track less an act of managing momentum than a precise operation. A good tool can drift, slide, and exit where and when you want.

As a tool, the Addict CX ticks all of the boxes: 12mm thru-axles front and back to stiffen the frame-to-wheel connection, hydraulic disc brakes, gobs of tire and mud clearance, internal cabling, ►



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Repair Stand

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CHAIN USING...



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IT AIN'T THE CHAIN.

*Bad news, it's
something else.*



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MECHANIC.

*Looks
GOOD?*

*Look FOR
WEAR N' TEAR.*

*But if your
lenses are dirty...*

Chain Wear
Indicator Tool

*Looks
WORN?*

CHAIN IS SHOT.

Time for surgery.

Ahhhh!



*Glove
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Mechanic's
Gloves

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HURT A BIT...

Chain Tool

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WAIT!

Lube UP FIRST.

*Get your mind
out of the gutter.*

Now...

**KEEP THAT CHAIN
LOOKING FRESH**

CAN YOU STAY AWAY FROM DIRT, RAIN, DUST?

YES

*I promise
TO ONLY
RIDE ON NEW
PAVEMENT
ON SUNNY
DAYS.*

*Good luck
with that....*

NO

*I bike
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WHEREVER
I PLEASE.*

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► great power transfer, adaptability for mechanical and electronic shifting, even internal cable routing for a dropper seatpost—though none of the four 27.2mm-diameter posts I tried accommodated my 73.5cm saddle height (as more manufacturers offer posts with less drop, this will change). SRAM Force CX1 delivers excellent, simple shifting with a single chainring up front. The Addict is also outfitted with one of the most robust, yet straightforward, 1x drivetrain chain-retention devices. This is important, because dropping a chain can result not only in losing a few places, but also, if it happens at the most inopportune time, losing races. The chainkeeper and front-derailleur mount use the same threaded inserts in the frame; simply swap one for the other depending on your setup.

With a couple of parts swaps, the Addict CX could become an even sharper tool. The 11-32 cassette was okay for training, but I'd want something tighter for competition. The saddle is comfortable, yet the rear edge is encircled in sharp, flat plastic—unforgivable on a perch you're constantly jumping on and off

of. The second time I gouged my leg, the saddle became destined for the bin.

But the Addict CX is more than a tool; it's also a toy. It's part of a game we've been at since we were kids—searching for the limits of traction, seeing if we can best our buddies through the mud bog and trails over by the church. As a toy, it's a tire swing on a hot day. It's everything you need to make 60 minutes of freezing cold, sloppy mud, and hypoxic breathing enjoyable. It's stable but lively. It tracks precisely and easily jumps to the shoulder for extended runs. It is supple and compliant on chattery terrain. The fork and front end are resolute—you can really get on it, then brake late, whipping the tail around as you transfer weight and alter your trajectory.

As a toy, it worked as well off the racecourse as on. When I was training and playing on the bike, I found it intuitive and well-balanced, suited to the aggressive dynamics of riding off-road on a drop bar. Two sets of water-bottle bosses extended the bike's capabilities for long days in the saddle. It was comfortable for multihour

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

12mm thru-axes front and rear mean choosing your wheels carefully, for now ■ 1x drivetrain—the front-derailleur tab can be swapped for a chain watcher ■ Easily accommodates 38mm tires—we aren't all UCI-mandated after all ■ **PRICE** \$5,900 ■ **WEIGHT** 16.6 lb. (54cm)



sessions around the edges of the cornfields and farm tracks that I ride on. The stiff carbon rims stood up to a beating on our rocky trails, and remained true.

This bike is as good for a game of, "What's down that new road?" as it is for your upcoming race. Either way, the Addict CX brings out your best, in work and play. —MIKE YOZELL

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Yeti SB5c Bet!

A dream bike for the ladyshredders

The first time I saw a Yeti, I was with my then-boyfriend and his best friend, Jon, and we were downhill at the Snowmass bike park. It was only my second time on a mountain bike, but I wasn't scared. Mostly, I was distracted by the striking lines and turquoise hue of Jon's bike.

"What is that?" I asked.

"It's a Yeti," he said. "They're from Colorado."

"Wow," I said. "That's a beautiful bike." Then I looked down at mine, and frowned.

From then on, I was ruined. I panted for that \$75 every time I rode with Jon, and for all the Yetis I saw on the trail. When it came time to upgrade, I was done having bike envy: I spent twice my budget to get an ASR5c. ▶



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 **GIANT.**





► That's why I think it's possible Yeti didn't need to make a women's model—just like me, plenty of female riders had long been captivated by the brand anyway. And when the new SB5c Beti launched this summer, I was glad it shared the identical frame, 140mm-travel fork, and five inches of rear-wheel suspension design

as the standard SB5c, which won BICYCLING's Editors' Choice award this spring.

Besides the coral paint scheme, differences are subtle: a narrower 720mm handlebar, 30-tooth chainring on the SRAM X01 1x11 drivetrain, shorter 170mm cranks on some sizes, lighter wheels, a women's saddle, and a different shock tune to accommodate lighter riders and keep the suspension more active over rough terrain. And yet, the cumulative effect is profound enough to prove that a women's bike that shares unisex geometry is still worth doing when it's done right.

I rode the standard SB5c during our Editors' Choice testing in Utah this spring, and agreed with the guys that it is one of the best trail bikes available. But when I got on the SB5c Beti, I was immediately struck by a springy, playful sensation that felt new to me: The bike had mad hang time. On the flats, a casual hop delivered twice the air I expected; at speed, small rollers boosted me just a little higher. Maybe it's the different shock tune, maybe not—whatever the reason, I found the women's SB5c even more fun

than the original. Rallying down Apex Trail in Golden, Colorado, I wondered, *Is this what the guys have been experiencing? I've been missing out!*

Like the standard version, the SB5c Beti rode like a longer-travel bike—it could come into rock gardens hot and absorb all that pummeling evenly through its entire stroke. It climbed efficiently and lightly, too—with the suspension wide open, my sub-25-pound tester hoofed it briskly up Colorado's extended climbs. When I got it home to the East Coast, the Beti SB5c proved to be more than ready for rocky, techy terrain; it stomped a local piece called the Boulder Trail and enabled me to clean sections I'd never cleaned before. Traction was better than on any other trail bike I've tested.

I would want the SB5c even if it didn't come in a women's build. But now it does, and what that means is that one of the best trail bikes on the market is just a little different, in all the right ways, to provide an even better experience for me. Which is kind of a problem: As bad as I wanted that original SB5c, I now covet the women's version even more. —GLORIA LIU

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

27.5-inch wheels ■ Rides like it has more than its 5 inches of rear-wheel suspension ■ Identical frame to BICYCLING Editors' Choice-winning SB5c ■ Available only in Yeti's X01 build, for now ■ PRICE \$6,899 ■ WEIGHT 24.8 lb. (S)



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Focus Cayo 3.0 Disc

No pavement? No problem.

The water covering the submerged trail wasn't quite up to the disc rotors—yet. I wasn't sure how much deeper it might get, but I wasn't keen to turn around. And the Focus Cayo 3.0 Disc didn't seem all that troubled either.

During the time I was testing the Cayo, Colorado's Front Range got rained on for so many consecutive days that we started out joking that we might forget what the sun looked like, then nearly forgot it was a joke. When the sun did finally peek out one morning, I took the Cayo on a meandering loop I've constructed that attempts to take in as much dirt as possible in one, 90-minute wander. The spontaneous pond fording was the first sign that this wasn't going to be a normal spin.

But not once did it cross my mind whether the Cayo was capable or even appropriate for the waterlogged and potholed route, or whether it was overbuilt for any of the paved sections. Nor did these questions pop up with the Cayo on any other ride—a steep, dirt climb slick with wet runoff, a gravel-strewn switch-back descent, or fast-and-flat farm roads.

This excellent evolution of the long-running

Cayo frame boasts efficient power transfer and a smooth ride that evens out dirt washboards and shattered pavement alike. If we're pigeonholing here, we'd call it an endurance road bike. But the Cayo stretches the constricting boundaries of labels like that.

It all starts with the disc brakes, Shimano's smooth and powerful RS685 hydraulics. The rest of the bike seems to sprout from those. Because of the discs, Focus borrows its Rapid Axle Technology (RAT) thru-axle system from its Mares cyclocross line. RAT uses a T-shaped pin instead of threads to lock the axle in place, combining the speedy removal of a quick-release with the security of a thru-axle. It makes the bike plenty stiff: Under acceleration or hard cornering, there's none of the ting-ting-ting of rotors

kissing brake pads, as can happen with conventional open dropouts.

Without rim brakes, there's extra tire clearance, so Focus can spec 25mm Schwalbe Duranos that measure out more like 26mm (and you can fit up to 30mm). Since going downhill on all that rubber is so much fun, you'll also be climbing a fair bit; hence the 52/36 chainrings and 11-28 cassette. With full Ultegra, the Cayo 3.0 Disc is a remarkable value at \$3,500.

On one end of the continuum of potential answers to the question, "How many bikes should I own?" is $n+1$, n being the number you already own. On the other end is the quiver-killer—the one mythical bike that can do it all. The Cayo 3.0 Disc comes pretty close to the myth. —JOE LINDSEY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Super comfortable, super versatile, all-road machine ■ Proprietary thru-axes secure disc wheels to frame and increase stiffness, but are specific to Focus ■ Hydraulic disc brakes ■ Outstanding value ■ **PRICE** \$3,500 ■ **WEIGHT** 18.5 lb. (54cm)

SMASHED IT.



Speedplay congratulates Sir Bradley Wiggins for setting a new UCI World Hour Record of 54.526 km. Racing at a blistering average speed of 33.88 mph, Wiggins obliterated the previous record by approximately 1 mile. For his record ride, Wiggins chose Speedplay's new Zero Aero Pedal System because of the aerodynamic advantage of its tiny frontal area and streamlined profile. Thank you, Bradley, for being the first to use Zero Aero pedals and for powering them into the record books! To learn more, visit Speedplay.com.


SPEEDPLAY.

Photo: Graham Watson

Specialized S-Works Stumpjumper FSR 6Fattie

Mo' traction, mo' betta

A freak thunderstorm, nearly tropical in magnitude, spent 10 minutes stripping the loose soil off the steep trail near my home in Southern California. The water carved a six-inch-wide rut; then the sun baked what dirt remained until it was rock-hard with only loose pebbles left on top.

I attempted the section a few days later on one of my favorite, 160mm-travel enduro bikes—and just barely made it through without crashing. The next day, I took out the Specialized S-Works Stumpjumper FSR 6Fattie, and rode the entire thing, dabbing only once. This moment convinced me that the 27.5+ tire trend is not just a fad—these 2.8- to 3.25-inch-wide tires provide a legitimate benefit.

The 2016 Stumpjumper comes in three options: 29-inch, 27.5-inch, and 6Fattie, Specialized's new 3-inch-wide, 27.5-inch-diameter trail tire. The 6Fattie Stumpy has a lot in common with its 29er brother, including the same 135mm-travel FSR rear-suspension design, and a rear end that was beefed up for 2016. Its chainstays and 150mm-travel Fox fork are spaced wider to accommodate the fatter tires. On the carbon models like the S-Works version we tested, a SWAT (Storage, Water, Air, Tools) compartment houses a tube, pump, and whatever else you can fit inside the down tube. I avoid wearing a hydration pack whenever I can—I find them to be hot and uncomfortable—and I love how the SWAT gets the weight off your back and stashes it low on the bike, where weight is less noticeable. ►



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This Stumpy comes in three options: 29er, 27.5-inch, and [pictured here] with the new 6Fattie tire. Carbon versions get the SWAT compartment [pictured below].

► According to Specialized, engineers were able to harness a 69 percent larger (compared with a 2.3-inch tire) contact patch during their test rides thanks to the extra width and ability to run lower tire pressures. Compared with the 20-or-so psi I typically run, I found that I could drop to 15 psi in the 6Fattie. All this extra footprint gave the tires a tenacious grip on steep and normally slippery surfaces, even when I was out of the saddle. A 28-tooth chainring on the 1x drivetrain typically would be on the low side for me, but it was well matched to the plus-size tires' climbing prowess and the grades they allowed me to scale. I rode more and walked less on the 6Fattie—and that's a win for any mountain biker.

Rim width is critical with wider tires, as the tire can fold over and wallow without sufficient tire pressure. We've had the best experience fitting plus-size tires on 38mm rims and up, but Specialized went for light weight here and chose its 30mm-wide Roval Fattie carbon wheels. The company says that the suspension on the Stumpy allows the rider to run slightly higher tire pressures than on hardtails

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

3-inch-wide tires offer more traction than traditional-width tires ■ Also available in a women's version, the Rhyme 6Fattie ■ Prices start at \$3,400 for Comp Alloy build ■ **PRICE** \$8,600 ■ **WEIGHT** 27.6 lb. (M)

(which most of the new plus-size tire models have been) and thus have less of a need for a wider rim. And it makes up for the weight penalty of the wider tire. I think it was a good call, as acceleration and handling felt surprisingly similar to a traditional 29er.

I tend to be skeptical about new standards unless they significantly enhance the riding experience—but I think plus-size tires and SWAT accomplish this. Like any new technology, plus-tire wheels and frames will improve over time. But with this early stab at 27.5+, Specialized created an impressively dialed and cohesive-feeling unit, not a half-baked idea.

Confused about which wheel or tire size to commit to? Specialized says that its 6Fattie is for riders who want more traction and control, 27.5 is for those who want more nimble handling, and 29ers are for those who value speed. I think they nailed it. Plus-size tires probably won't ever be popular on cross-country racecourses, but for those of us who ride outside the tape, bikes like the 6Fattie Stumpy offer a genuine performance advantage—and the ability to have even more fun. —RON KOCH



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Joe Burtoni
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Should You Get a 1X on Your Road Bike?

We test three applications of SRAM's new 1x drivetrains to see whether it's time to ditch that second chainring

SRAM introduced its 1x (pronounced “one-by,” as in, “1x11”) group-sets on mountain bikes in 2012. With a single chainring in the front, and a 10- or 11-cog cassette with a wider range in the rear, the 1x provided the same high and low gears as a double-ring drivetrain, while eliminating front shifting. In 2014, 1x came to drop-bar bikes in the form of CX1 for cyclocross. Now, SRAM's Force 1 and Rival 1 groups are bringing 1x to the road.

SRAM's system cleans up the look of a bike, shifts well, and has

features to keep your chain in place. It may save some weight, too: The company claims about 170 grams, but it could be significantly less depending on your chainring and cassette choice.

But there are sacrifices for simplicity: Compared with a double, 1x either offers the same high and low gears, with bigger jumps in between; or the same tight jumps, but with less range. We tested the 1x system for everything from crit-racing, to rolling into town for a frozen custard, to determine when the single chainring can rule them all.—MATT PHILLIPS



ADVENTURE

GROUP: SRAM RIVAL 1

CHAINRING: 44T

CASSETTE: 10-42

BIKE: NINER RLT 9 STEEL



I rode this bike after work on a day I felt especially cooped up and frustrated, so I was tearing around like a bat out of windowless office hell. I was surprised at how fluid the shifting was and how little I felt the need for another chainring.

As for this particular gearing combination, I think a stronger rider would be okay with it. But for the fully loaded, cross-country touring I used to do, during which you're carrying 50 pounds, I would have needed a smaller gear in the front for the eastern part of the country [the Appalachians], though probably not the western [the Rockies]. In my opinion, this setup was ideal for carrying weight, climbing steep terrain, being off-road, and any combination of two of those things—not all three of those conditions at the same time. —CAITLIN GIDDINGS

I liked this system more than I expected. I took it up Tenth Street—which hits over 20 percent grades—with loaded panniers, and never felt like I didn't have enough gears. Sure, I was slow, but I could just chug along without fighting for every pedal stroke. Coming down Fifth, I had a high enough gear to be satisfied on the steep downhill too. —TAYLOR ROJEK

I tested the 1x on some long, solo rides, including one with 7,000 feet of climbing and dirt roads. Days like these, you turn your brain off and just pedal, so it was nice to forget about front shifting. The Double-Tap shifters were also a fantastic complement; they only further simplified things. One shifter, one chainring, one question: Easier or harder? Bada-bing, bada-boom. The nearly 1:1 low gear gave me what I needed even when climbs hit over 10 percent, and I rarely spun out on descents—though I wasn't pushing the pace, because that wasn't the point. It was also easy to quickly find my comfortable gear. Maybe if you were gravel racing, you'd want a bigger gear and more fine-tuning. But 1x was ideal for these long, climb-y rides where you're just out to explore all day. —GLORIA LIU

SHOULD YOU SINGLE UP?

Definitely, maybe, probably, sure. For lightweight touring and all-day adventure riding, we love the simplicity and climbing assistance of a 1x and a wide-range cassette. But on longer, fully-loaded tours and gravel races, you may want more gearing options.

FITNESS/ RECREATION

GROUP: SRAM RIVAL 1 WITH
S-SERIES S-700 FLAT-BAR SHIFTERS
CHAINRING: 42T
CASSETTE: 11-36
BIKE: WHYTE MONTPELLIER

ON MY FIRST CLIMB, a ridiculous thought crossed my mind: Could two-by drivetrains eventually end up in landfills next to tube TVs? Of course they won't, but the experience was so satisfying, it seemed valid for a moment. I had gears to spare on that first climb. And the next.

Who is this 1x drivetrain for? Maybe someone like me. I don't race. I don't train. I just like to ride. I like to knock around town and commute. My ride to work is a rolling 10 miles. Having fewer gears to deal with and no left lever to think about is awesome. Shifting is smooth and quiet, too. I could confidently tell someone who wants a bike for recreational use that a 1x drivetrain is really worth considering. —JENNIFER SHERRY

I was pedaling up a short but steep wall of road, clicking into easier gears along the way. As I neared the crest, I rose out of the saddle because I figured I'd reached my easiest gear. When I stopped to rest at the top, tired but not trashed, I was pleasantly surprised to see that I'd actually had two cogs to spare. I did rely on that easiest gear on a road ride with longer climbs, some with steep switchbacks. If I'd had more cogs, would I have used them? Probably. Did I enjoy the climb without them? Absolutely.

I think this system would work beautifully for casual or newer cyclists. It might encourage people who never touch their gears because they're intimidated by them, to make better use of their bike's abilities. —EMILY FURIA

SHOULD YOU SINGLE UP?

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RACING

GROUP: SRAM FORCE 1

CHAINRING: 52T

CASSETTE: 11-26

BIKE: SPECIALIZED TARMAC



Most races we do around here are crits, and for those it's all big ring. You'd think that a 1x system would be fine. But in racing, or race-like situations, 11-25 is as broad a range as I want in the back—one to two teeth per jump. When I'm on the edge I need to be in exactly the right gear; if not, I risk blowing up trying to push a gear that's slightly too hard.

For our weekly crit, the 1x was totally fine—I had the gears I needed, and the spacing I needed between them. But that setup was impractical for training or for a hilly road race. I rode it on the lunch ride and suffered on our rolling terrain—52/26 isn't a great climbing gear. I also rode the Derby, and while the downhill ride there, 20-mile roll out, and the lung-busting sprint back were fine, riding home up past Bear Creek, I actually considered walking. —BRAD FORD

Having a 1x turned the Tarmac into a dedicated crit racer.

You could try running a wide-range cassette, but when attempting to fine-tune, the jumps between gears mess with power, cadence, and your head, all at once. I settled on an 11-26 and a 52T ring. It was just enough to be competitive in bunch sprints and worked fine when in a group. Surprisingly, where it turned out to be good was driving across to a break, or taking a solo flyer. Having the gears just a little lower meant staying on top of them just a little longer.

This did come at the loss of utility. On easy days, I reached for a different bike—changing cassettes to get a range low enough for spinning is a pain. And no matter what bike I have a 1x on, I'm going to use a stout chain keeper. That cuts into weight savings, but better than an untimely trip to the hospital. Any chance of the chain coming off in a sprint is more of a chance than I am willing to take. —MIKE YOZELL

SHOULD YOU SINGLE UP?

Sure—if you want a dedicated crit bike. Otherwise, you'll be happier with the combination of a wider range and smaller jumps allowed by a second chainring.

OVERALL VERDICT The 1x solution is promising—this is the sole road product in recent memory that, instead of adding gears or electronics, actually makes your drivetrain simpler. **WHEN TO GO 1x** On a dedicated crit bike ■ If shifting has confused or frustrated you in the past ■ If you mostly do long, noncompetitive fitness, endurance, or adventure rides **KEEP THE DOUBLE ON** If you race and train on the same bike ■ You do a lot of fast group rides ■ You're very particular about your gearing **PRICE** SRAM Rival 1: \$675 to \$1,168; SRAM Force 1: \$1,070 to \$1,633 (depending on crank, and disc vs. mechanical brake options)

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From Silca to Shinola, cycling entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the larger cultural trend of embracing resurrected or rebooted heritage brands. Beginning in the 1960s and lasting into the neon '90s, the Italian company Brancale was, along with Cinelli, the premier manufacturer of leather hairnets, a respected producer of early hard-shell helmets (including the Brancale Sport, worn by

the villain Belov in *American Flyers*), and a supplier of handmade leather shoes for Greg LeMond and other stylish champions. The new Brancale, based in the US and manufacturing here as well as in Italy and England, offers bibs, jerseys, socks, and arm warmers featuring the iconic logo. But its most striking product pays tribute to the brand's legacy in leather: short-finger (\$180) and long-finger (\$200) gloves. That's

pricey for an inessential piece of kit that's subject to a lot of wear as well as outright abuse, but it's competitive with similar mitts from Rapha, Dromarti, and others. And because leather acquires character as it ages, and absorbs the ravages of water, sweat, grease, and abrasion, devotees will happily pay more for a product that has not only a longer life than fabric versions, but also a more beautiful one.—BILL STRICKLAND

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Ben Weaver

CONTINUED FROM P. 73

In Clarksdale, Mississippi, as Weaver is performing at the Quapaw Canoe Company, a 60-something African American man in a phosphorescent three-piece suit slaps his knees and shouts out, “Yeah, I hear some blues in there,” and Weaver smiles—home in a spiritual sense.

It’s between Clarksdale and Greenwood that the elderly man labels us crazy, and we grin about that one for a while. We look a little crazy, we suppose—Weaver especially, with the necks of his guitar and banjo jutting upward from the rear panniers and resembling, in their black waterproof cases, twin smokestacks. And maybe we are a little crazy. How else to explain the magnificently vacant space that opens up in your head after 20 days of nonstop riding? Or the way seven or eight hours can pass without those clinches of anxiety that gum up a regular day in the life? Or the way a hot link of *boudin* sausage and a cold Coca-Cola, scarfed outside a filling station at a little Louisiana crossroads, feels like a sacred experience—a bona fide brush with the divine? Perhaps it’s owing to the season, or maybe it’s our route, but it’s not until we’re just outside New Orleans that we finally encounter other touring cyclists—a couple heading east as we’re heading west, fellow inmates of our grand asylum, acknowledged with a wave.

New Orleans proffers euphoria to anyone who desires it, but, strangely, we’re disinclined to receive it. We’d expected to want to pollute ourselves with Sazeracs and crawfish cream sauce, but instead of wallowing, we find ourselves antsy, and touched by something like melancholy. Despite 1,500 miles and 24 days, the end feels abrupt—it’s too soon. Weaver plays a final show outside, beside the Mississippi River. Then he squanders the two days of rest he afforded himself in the itinerary by trying to figure out—on the phone with family, airlines, venues—a way he can ride back home rather than fly. **B**

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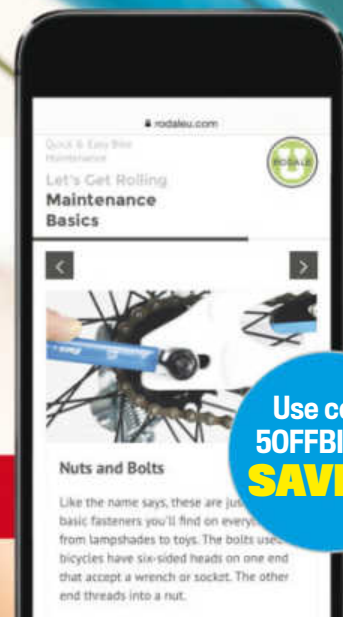
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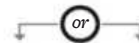
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Grace <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power ⁵
Handbuilt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High tech
Hours <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Miles
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Low socks <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Tall socks
Pack ⁶ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solo ⁶
Components <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frame
Spandex <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Wool
Racing <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Riding ⁷
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1. **RW:** I'm not a sprinter—I like to get away and work hard. **LW:** I always like to surprise people. 2. **RW:** I think of trucker hats and I don't like those. **LW:** I actually have a trucker hat on right now. 3. **RW:** I like that they're long and grueling day in and day out. **LW:** The little people always win. 4. **RW:** The best races I've had are with my will and heart. **LW:** My legs have gotten me far. My mom says I have a gift. 5. **RW:** I muscle my way through things. Laurel makes everything look effortless. 6. **RW:** I like to set my own pace. **LW:** I like the dynamics of it, and you get a harder workout in the end. 7. **LW:** You can do it every day.

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